Cultural competencies in Higher Education - What? Why? And how?

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Graz, April 26, 2018

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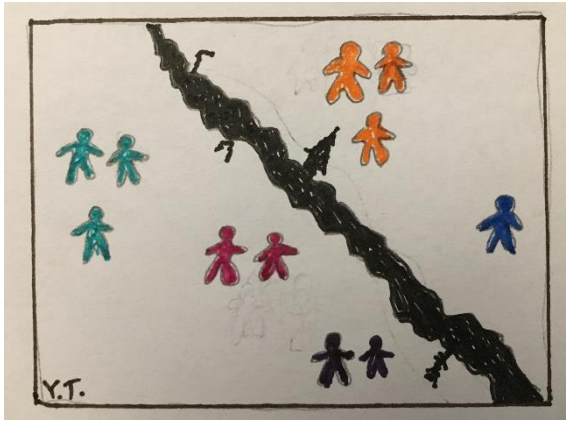
Helen Tigerud 2002

Today's society – diverse by definition and fragile in many ways

- Globalisation
- Migrations and mobility
- Ongoing and arising conflicts
- Challenges to humanity – need for sustainability

How can there be peace without people understanding each other, and how can this be if they don't know each other? How can there be cooperative coexistence, which is the only kind that means anything, if men are cut off from each other, if they are not allowed to learn more about each other? Lester B Pearson, Nobel Lecture of 1957

Multicultural



Intercultural

Photos: Yael Tågerud

Intercultural communication competence

Intercultural effectiveness

Intercultural competence

Intercultural sensitivity

Cross-cultural effectiveness

Developing intercultural competence is essential for cross-cultural teaching initiatives and, in general, for navigating the continuum of globalization.

As people become more globally mobile, the ability to respect and value other cultures is not only imperative to educational systems around the world but to producing globally-minded citizens, preparing them to work in international contexts and creating a more democratic society. (Gopal 2011)

As diversity rises and countries of the world become increasingly multicultural educators are concerned with what kind of education would best serve the students population of diverse backgrounds, and prepare individuals for the multicultural world.

Educational equity for all students, regardless of their cultural, religious, gender or racial background.

(Salili & Hoosain 2007)

Intercultural competence is especially important to educators, who must prepare all students for democratic life in a multicultural society. Teachers at all levels are experiencing an increase in the cultural and linguistic diversity of student populations. Consequently, they must rethink and possibly reform their educational practices to meet the needs of their diverse learners.

(Betse C. Esber, PhD, *Pennsylvania State University)*

Intercultural communication competences

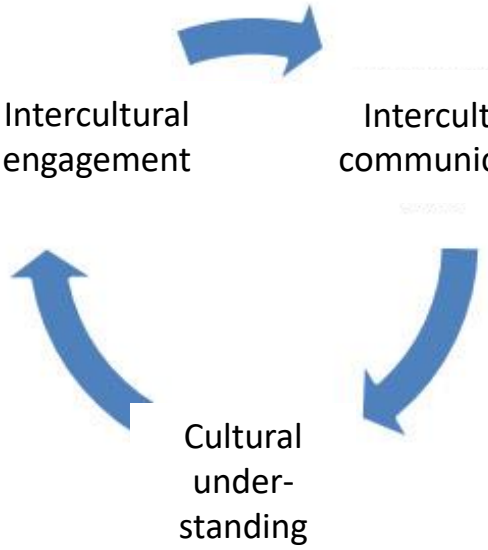
"*the degree to which an individual is able to exchange information effectively and appropriately with individuals who are culturally dissimilar*“

(Rogers & Steinfatt 1998)

Cultural intelligence (CI)

The ability to make oneself understood and the ability to create a fruitful collaboration in situations where cultural differences play a role.

Motivation, courage, driving forces and stumbling blocks, subjective attitudes.

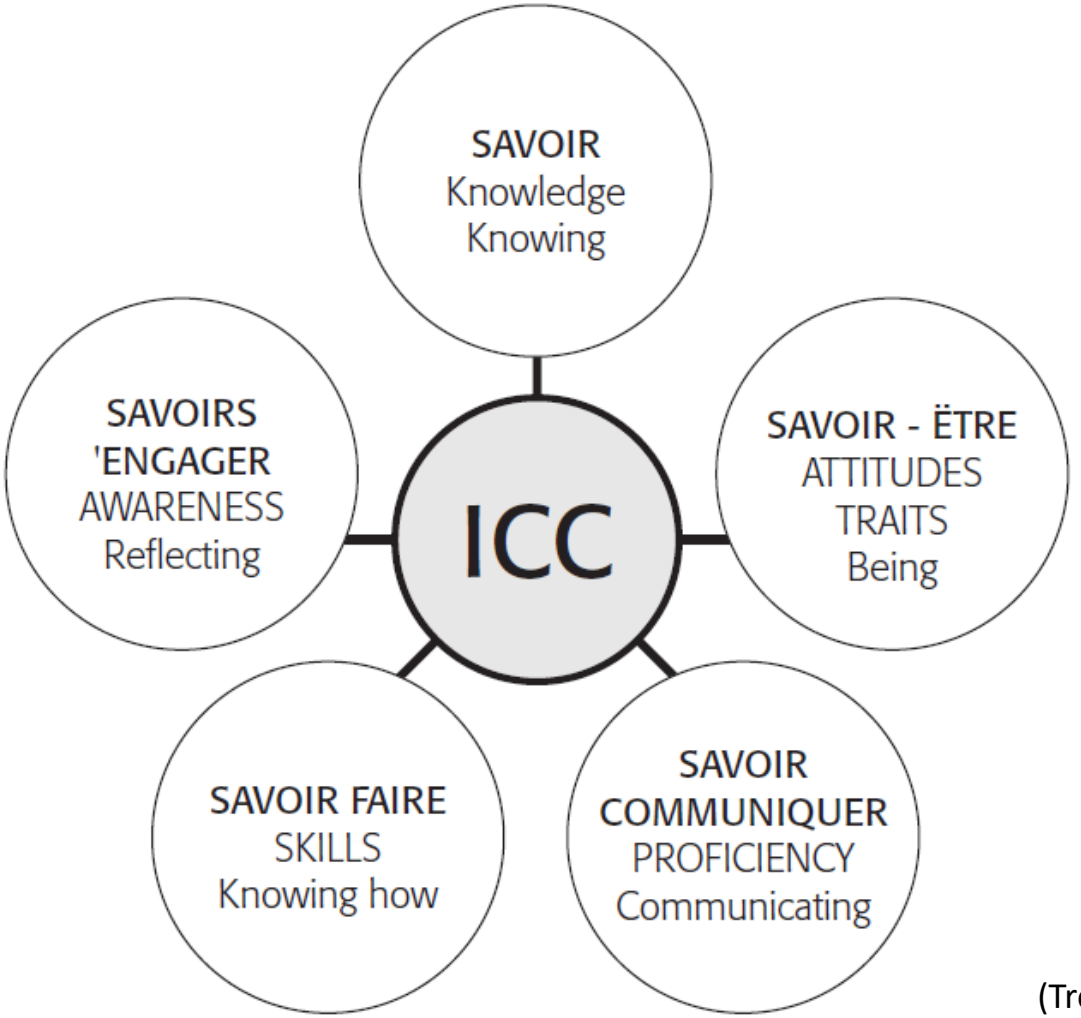


what we actually do in the encounter.

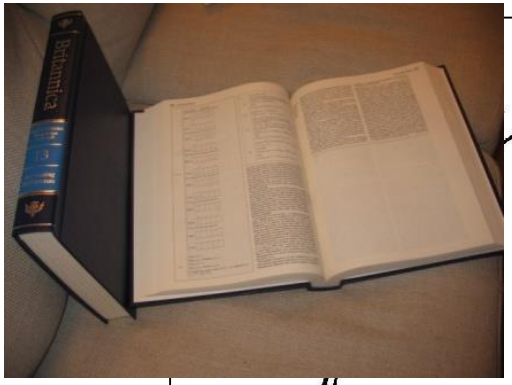
Knowledge about culture (general) and about characteristics of various cultures (specific). Flexibility and ability to transfer experience from one encounter to another. Analyse what is going on.

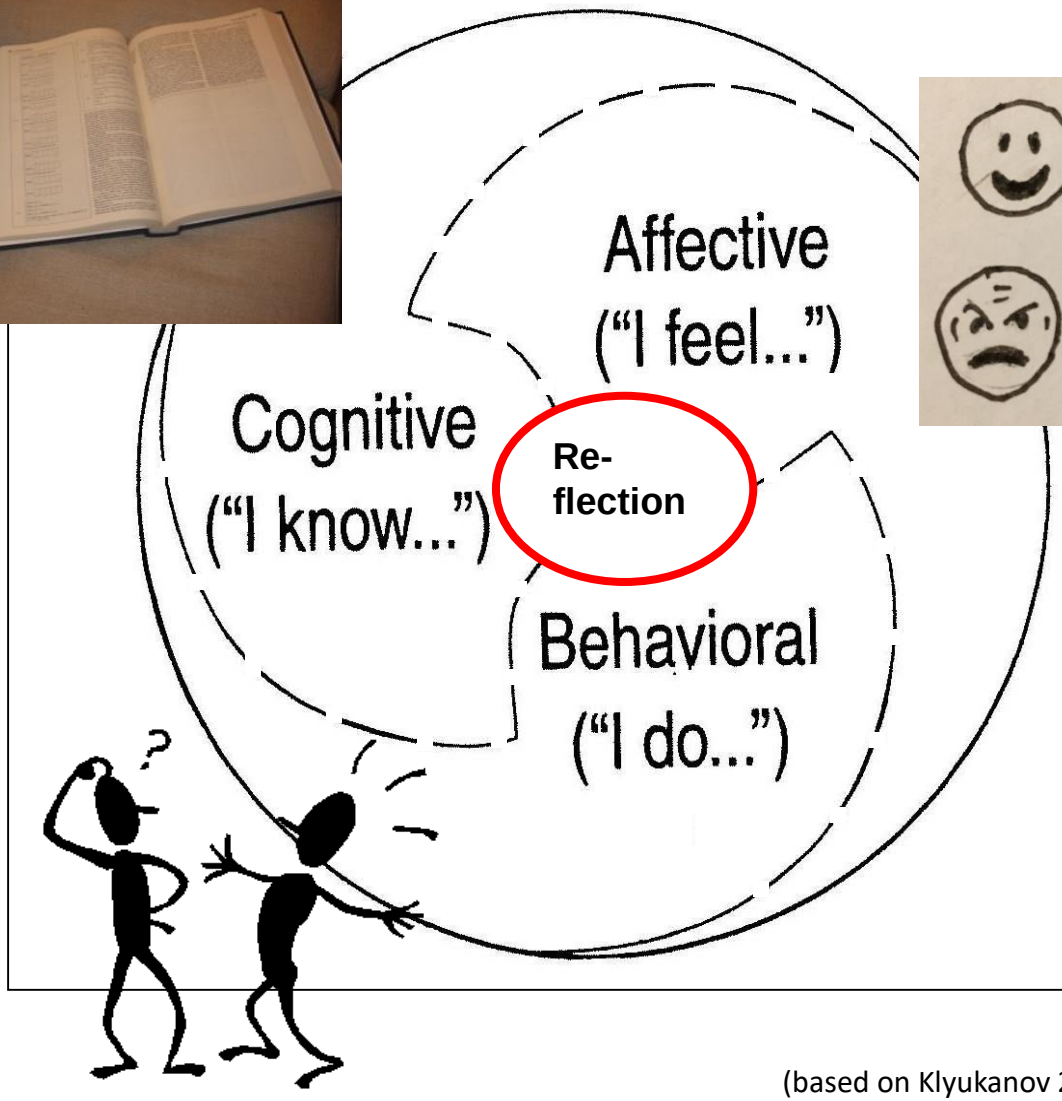
(based on Ang & Van Dyne 2007; Plum 2008)

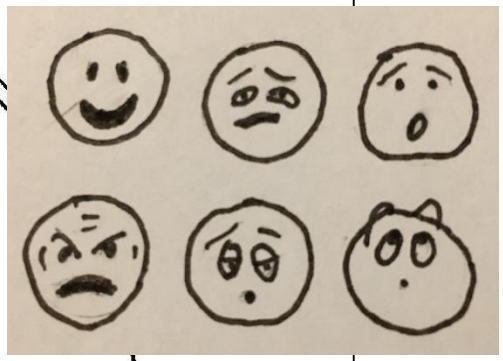
Components and dimensions of intercultural communication competences (ICC)



(Troncoso 2012)







(based on Klyukanov 2005 and Fantin 2006 & 2009)

Personal strength:

- Self awareness
- Self observation
- Self disclosure
- Social relaxation

Communication skills:

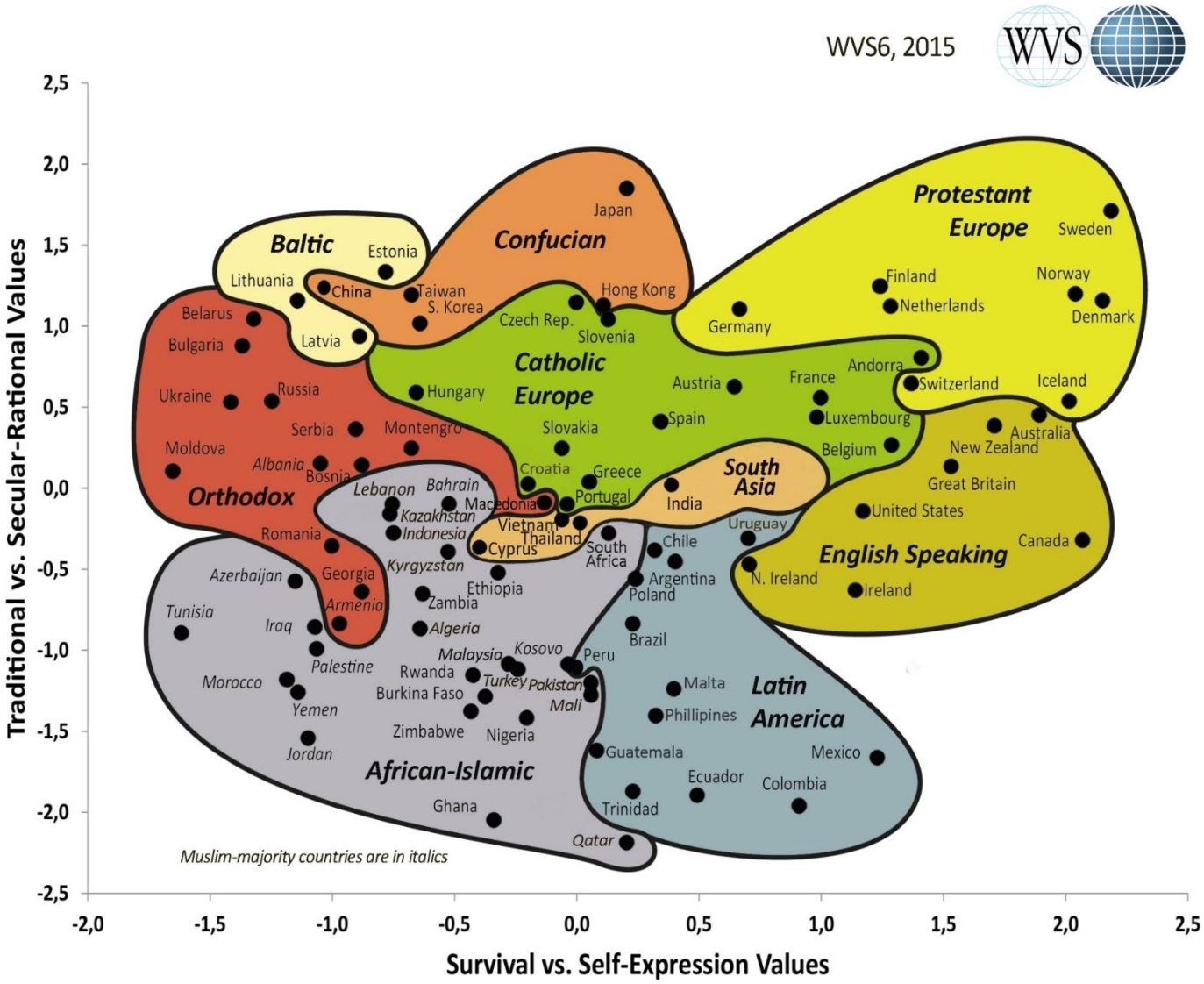
- Verbal + non-verbal
- Flexible behaviour patterns
- Handling interactions
- Social skills

Psychological adjustment:

- Acclimatization to different environments
- Handle cultural shock

Cultural insightfullness:

- Realizing the complexity of cultures
- Understanding and integrating diversified cultural systems



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Intercultural communication is NOT ONLY about communication between people from different countries

Photo: Anders Olsson

Photo: Lnu

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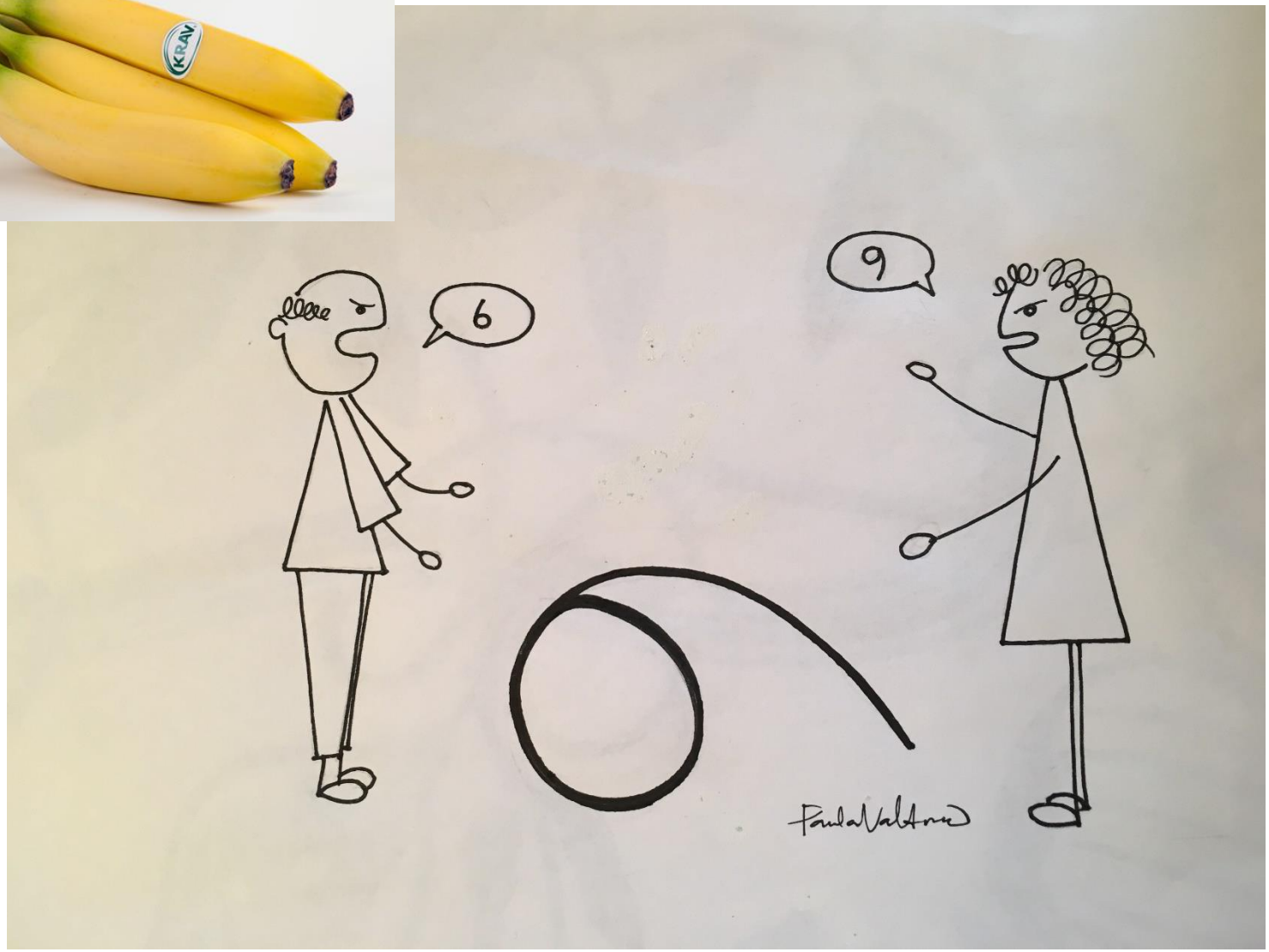
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- Attention (mindfulness)
  - Create new categories
  - Openness to new information
  - Cultural relativism – multiperspective
- Allow ambiguity
  - Cope with lack of information
  - Cope with information that does not make sense initially

Metacommunication: Communication about communication

Dialogue: Confronting own and others' assumptions, revealing feelings, creating common ground

Behind the need to communication is the need to share.
Behind the need to share is the need to be understood.
Leo Rosten

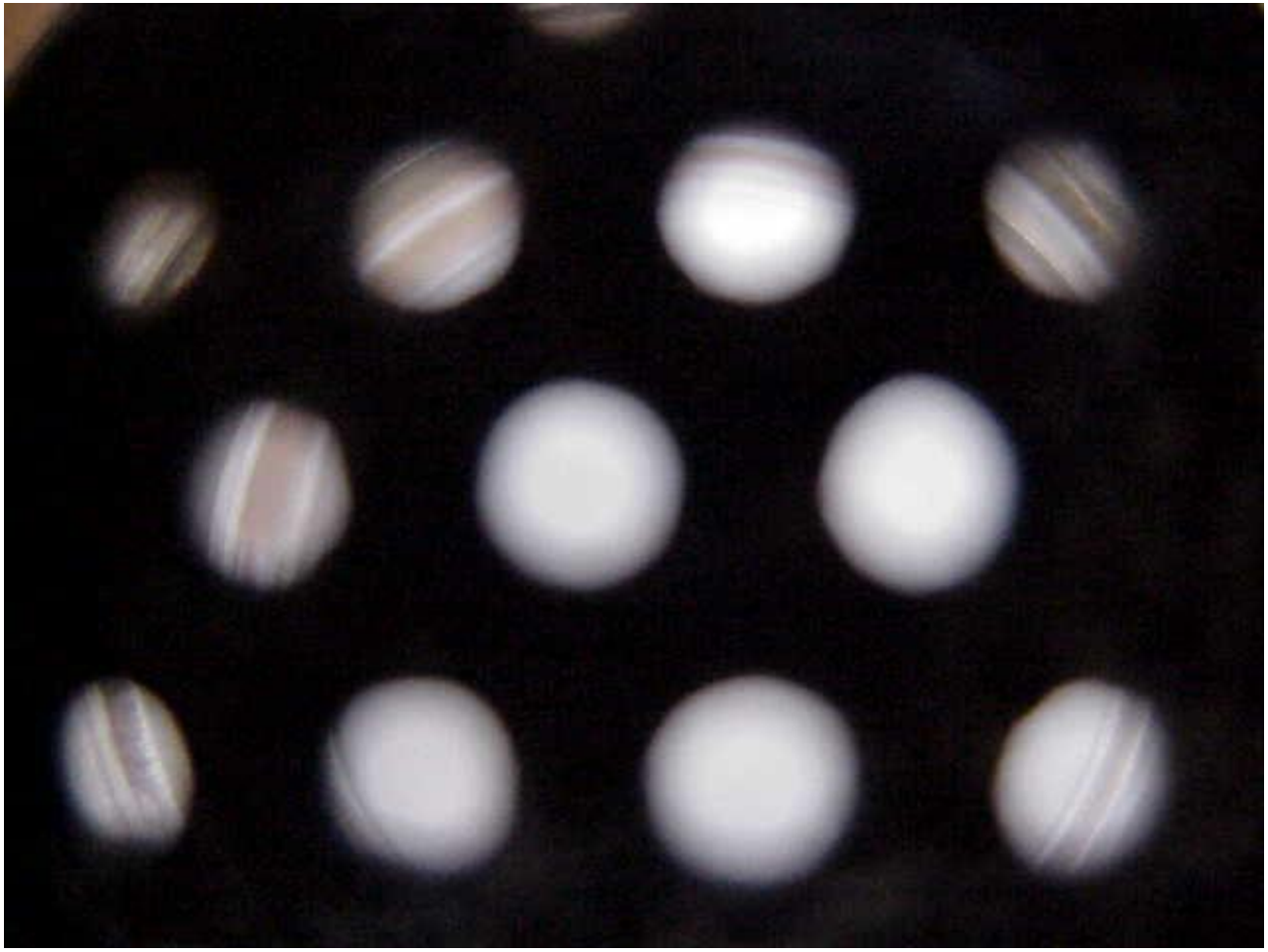
Various approaches to ICC

Cultural general + cultural specific

- Don’t take anything for granted
- Distinguish between generalization and stereotyping
- Reflect over your own stereotypes and ethnocentric approach
- Remember to engage in metacommunication
- Listen actively and engage in dialogue
- Use feedback to assure high-fidelity communication
- Practice changing perspective and consider alternatives
- Dare to move out of your comfort zone
- Practice D-I-E (description-interpretation-evaluation)

openness
understanding
Perspective
body
self-development
self-criticism
approach
dialogue
reflect
experience
contact
expectation
acceptance
observation
awareness
intercultural
pointsofview
energy
respect
dream
language
similarity
communication
administration
thejourney

Intercultural communication is a process whereby people from different cultures integrate their resources, striving towards an optimal result that cannot be achieved by any culture individually (Klyukanov 2005)



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Thank you

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Merci

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Gracias

Danke

Tack

Dank je

Хвала вам

Grazie

ありがとう

Teşekkürler

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