

INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS WORKSHOP

LEVEL ONE



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INTERCULTURAL WORKSHOP OUTLINE

In this workshop we will be examining:

- Definitions of culture
- Aspects of culture
- Sources of cultural programming
- Cultural iceberg concept
- Knowledge of other cultures
- Cultural norms and values
- Intercultural Development Continuum
- Managing Cultural Diversity

INTRODUCTORY EXERCISE IN SMALL GROUPS

What do the following terms mean? What is the difference? Is there a preferred order?

CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

CULTURAL AWARENESS

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

CULTURAL COMPETENCE

INTERCULTURAL TRAINING EXERCISE

Five alternative definitions of culture

Below are five alternative definitions of cultures. Which definition(s) of culture do you prefer? You can choose as many as you wish.

1. Objective visible artefacts such as rituals, superstitions, heroes, myths, symbols and taboos.
2. Basic truths about identity and relationships, time and space, ways of thinking and learning, ways of working and organizing, and ways of communicating.
3. Ideals shared by group members to which strong emotions are attached.
4. The 'right' and 'wrong' ways of doing things. The rules people live by in practice.
5. Subjective behavioural orientations to do things in one way, rather than another. They are most noticeable in relationship styles, thinking and learning styles, organization and work styles and communication styles.

(1) Taken from the Intercultural Training Exercise Pack

www.culturewise.net/wp-content/.../Cultural-awareness-training-exercise-pack.pdf

WHAT IS CULTURE?

There are many definitions.

“The collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group from another.” *Geert Hofstede*

“The traditions, customs, norms, beliefs, values, and thought patterning that are passed down from generation to generation”. *Michael Prosser*

“Culture is the way of life of a group who share certain historical experiences, ideas, knowledge, beliefs, art, law, traditions, customs and any other behaviour patterns.” *Carl E. James*

“Culture is the way we do things when no one tells us what to do” *Lionel Laroche*

You could say that culture is made up of ideas, behaviours and products. We are familiar with the products and behaviours of culture. Cultural products are observable things as literature, folklore, art, music, and artefacts. Cultural behaviours include customs, habits, dress, food and leisure. But there is another important aspect to culture, that of basic assumptions and values that prescribe the thinking and the motivation behind every interaction. It is this aspect that is important for those who are working with diverse cultures as these are not observable: they are ways of being and ways of thinking.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency of people to judge other cultures by the “standards” of their own culture, believing their way to be the right way. Culture prescribes the behaviour (and language) that is believed to be appropriate for a given situation.

Misattribution occurs when we witness behaviour that is ambiguous or strange from our perspective and we interpret the situation and assign motivation based on our cultural frame of reference.

Important to remember is that what is “acceptable” and “familiar” in one culture is not likely to be the same in another and when we experience irritation, or frustration when misunderstandings or miscommunications occur it is because we made an unconscious assumption that our context or lived experiences and behaviours were the same.

THE CULTURAL ICEBERG

SURFACE CULTURE

Food
Flags Festivals
Fashion Holidays Music
Performances Dances Games
Arts & Crafts Literature Language

DEEP CULTURE

Communications Styles and Rules:

Facial Expressions Gestures Eye Contact
Personal Space Touching Body Language
Conversational Patterns in Different Social Situations
Handling and Displaying of Emotion
Tone of Voice

Notions of:

Courtesy and Manners
Friendship Leadership
Cleanliness Modesty
Beauty

Concepts of:

Self Time Past and Future
Fairness and Justice
Roles related to Age, Sex,
Class, Family, etc.

Attitudes toward:

Elders Adolescents Dependents
Rule Expectations Work Authority
Cooperation vs. Competition
Relationships with Animals Age
Sin Death

Approaches to:

Religion Courtship Marriage
Raising Children Decision-Making
Problem Solving

(2) www.constantforeigner.com © 2010 Edward T. Hall's Cultural Iceberg Model In 1976

EDWARD T. HALL'S CULTURAL ICEBERG MODEL

In 1976, Hall developed the iceberg analogy of culture. If the culture of a society was the iceberg, Hall reasoned, then there are some aspects visible, above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface. What does that mean? The external, or conscious, part of culture is what we can see and is the tip of the iceberg and includes behaviors and some beliefs. The internal, or subconscious, part of culture is below the surface of a society and includes some beliefs and the values and thought patterns that underlie behavior. There are major differences between the conscious and unconscious culture. Internal / External, Implicitly Learned Explicitly Learned, Unconscious/Conscious Difficult to Change, Easily Changed, Subjective Knowledge / Objective Knowledge.

What can we do? Hall suggests that the only way to learn the internal culture of others is to actively participate in their culture. When one first enters a new culture, only the most overt behaviors are apparent. As one spends more time in that new culture, the underlying beliefs, values, and thought patterns that dictate that behavior will be uncovered. What this model teaches us is that we cannot judge a new culture based only on what we see when we first enter it. We must take the time to get to know individuals from that culture and interact with them. Only by doing so can we uncover the values and beliefs that underlie the behavior of that society.

EXAMPLE OF CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

1. Think about a culture different to your own.
2. Complete the checklist answering Yes, No or Don't Know to each question.
3. If you don't know, how will you find out about the answer?

Non-verbal communication

Should I expect differences in what is thought of as appropriate 'personal space'?

Should I anticipate differences in the way people of different cultures use touch?

Should I avoid any particular gestures?

Should I expect differences in the level of acceptable eye contact?

Do I know what body language is taboo or with whom?

Communication

Should I anticipate different attitudes about the acceptability of asking personal questions?

Should I anticipate different attitudes towards the acceptability of humour and emotions?

Should I anticipate different attitudes towards the acceptability of interrupting?

Should I anticipate a different attitude towards addressing difficult issues directly?

Do I know what style of feedback is acceptable?

Should I anticipate different expectations about the expression of criticism?

Should I anticipate different expectations about the expression of anger?

Should I anticipate different expectations about the formality of feedback?

Do I know the range of ways in which disagreement is likely to be expressed?

Should I expect a different style of conflict resolution?

Should I anticipate different expectations about the use of silence?

Should I anticipate different communication styles to be in use?

Do I know when to use first names and surnames?

Do I know what professional titles to use?

Should I anticipate different attitudes towards small-talk?

Should I anticipate different attitudes towards the importance of saving face?

Should I anticipate a different use of tone or pitch when speaking?

Should I expect different attitudes towards displays of affection?

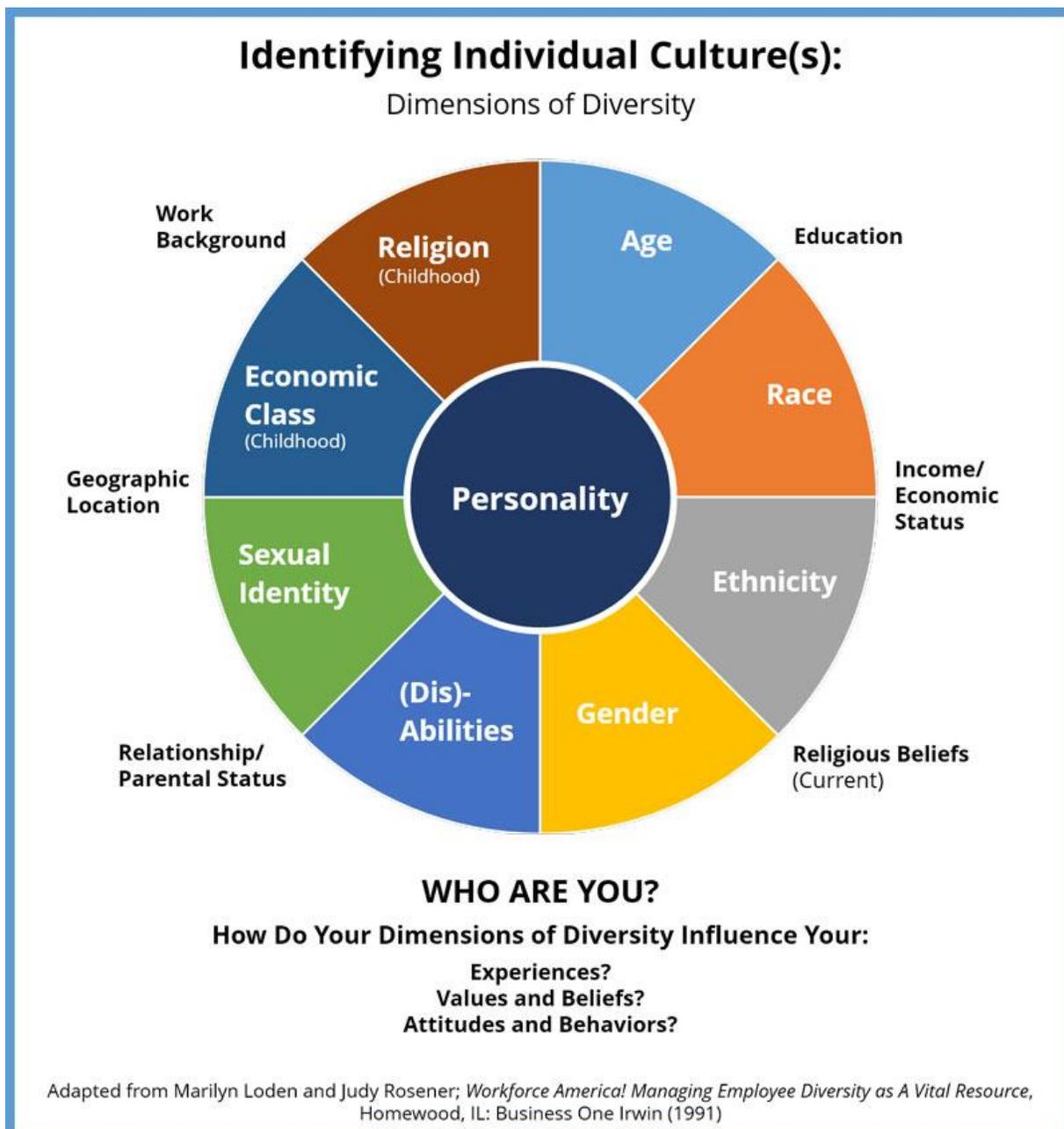
Should I know of any important traditions or celebrations different to my own?

Taken from Intercultural Training Exercise Pack

www.culturewise.net/wp-content/.../Cultural-awareness-training-exercise-pack.pdf

THE CULTURE WHEEL

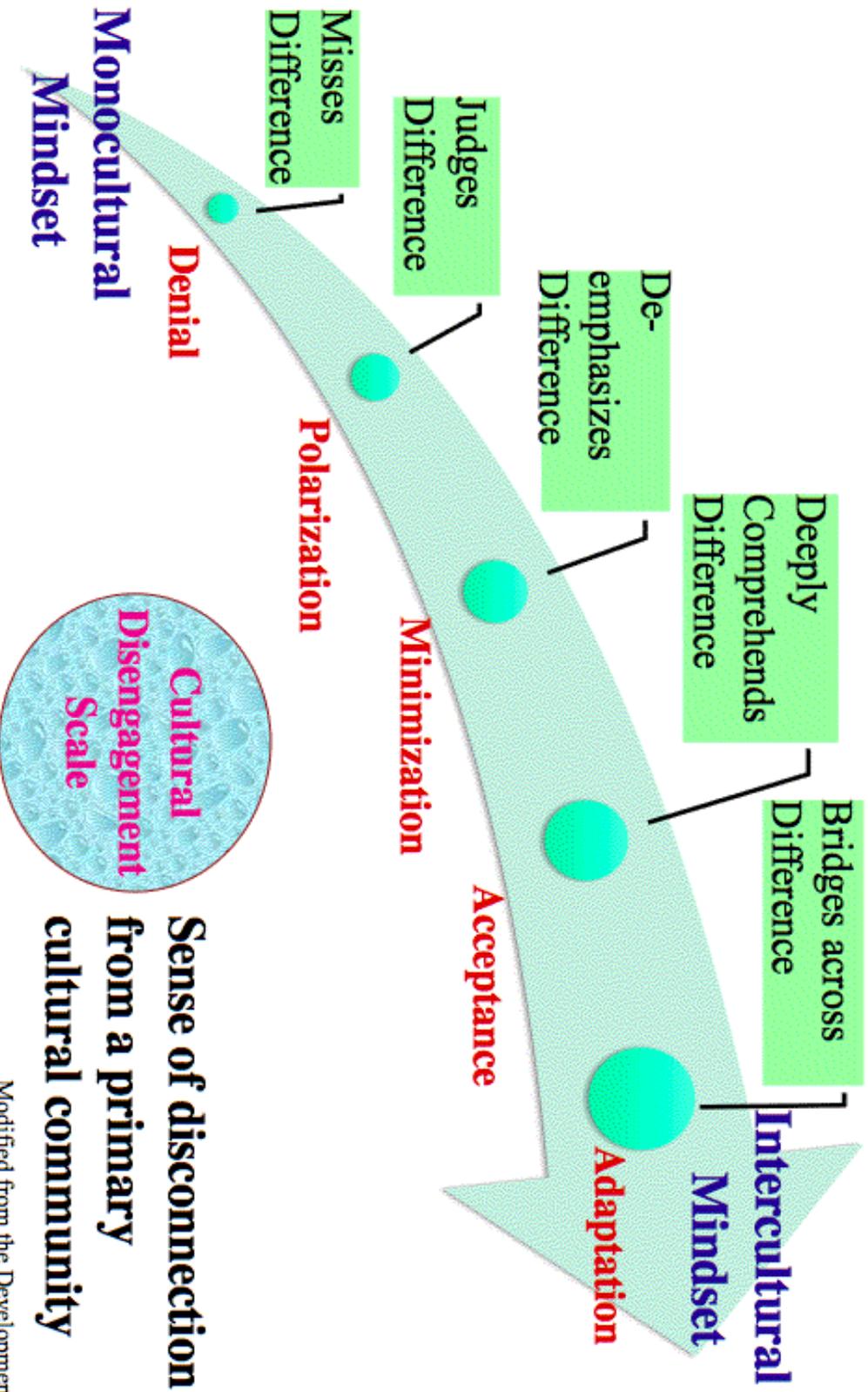
1. What do you most identify with?
2. What do you spend the most time thinking about?
3. What do you spend the most time in or doing?
4. What do you value or think is most important?



Following chart adapted from Gardenswartz & Rowe, 1998 – *Managing Diversity Ch. 4 Page 67 the cultural dimension theories of Geert Hofstede*

ASPECTS OF CULTURE	Culture A	Culture B
1. SENSE OF SELF AND SPACE	Handshake, personal bubble, broader proximity	Formal bow, nod, handshake, curtsy, hug, proximity closer
2. COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE	Explicit, direct, emphasis on content – meaning found in words	Implicit, indirect, emphasis on context – meaning found around words - anecdotal
3. DRESS AND APPEARANCE	Wide range in acceptable dress / professional / casual	Dress seen as a sign of position, wealth, prestige. Religious rules.
4. FOOD AND EATING HABITS	Sometimes fast food or convenience food due to pace of life, family activities. Extended family reunions.	Dining as a social / family experience. Religious or spiritual traditions or rules. Extended family gatherings.
5. TIME AND TIME CONSCIOUSNESS	Linear and exact time consciousness. Value promptness Time = Money / Monochromatic	Elastic and relative time consciousness. Time spent on building relationships. Polychromatic
6. RELATIONSHIPS, FAMILY and FRIENDS	Focus on nuclear family. Responsible for self. Value youth.	Focus on extended family. Loyalty and responsibility to family
7. VALUES AND NORMS	Individual orientation. Independence. Preference for direct confrontation of conflict and dealing face to face.	Group orientation. Conformity. Preference for harmony and saving face (own and other)
8. BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES	Egalitarian. Low power distance. Achieved status. Challenge authority. Control destiny. Gender equity.	Hierarchical. Higher power distance. Ascribed status. Respect for authority / elders / social order. Accept destiny /fate. Gender inequity.
9. MENTAL PROCESSES AND LEARNING STYLE	Linear, logical, sequential. Problem solving focus.	Lateral, holistic, simultaneous.
10. WORK HABITS AND PRACTICES	Emphasis on task. Reward based on individual achievement.	Emphasis on relationships. Rewards based on seniority/relationships.

Intercultural Development Continuum: Primary Orientations



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Hammer, Ph.D., IDI, LLC

Modified from the Developmental
Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
(DMIS), M. Bennett, 1986

**Sense of disconnection
from a primary
cultural community**

DEGREES OF CULTURAL AWARENESS – RELATES TO CONTINUUM

- **Denial:** little recognition of deeper cultural differences but that likely recognizes more observable ones such as food.
- **Polarization:** a judgmental orientation that views the difference in terms of "us vs. them." It can show up as **Defense** in which the person is uncritical towards one's own cultural practices but is overly critical towards others' cultural practices, or it can show up as **Reversal** in which the person is overly critical towards one's own cultural practices, and an uncritical view toward other cultural values and practices.
- **Minimization:** highlights cultural commonality that can mask deeper recognition and appreciation of cultural differences.
- **Acceptance:** recognition and appreciation of patterns of cultural difference and commonality in one's own and other cultures.
- **Adaptation:** the capability to shift cultural perspective and change behavior in culturally appropriate and authentic ways.

To summarize

Cultural Awareness is the foundation of communication, and it involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions. Why do we do things a certain way?

Cultural awareness becomes central when we interact with people of other cultures. As we have experienced, people see, interpret, and evaluate things in different ways. What is considered an appropriate behaviour in one culture is frequently inappropriate in another. Misunderstandings arise when I use my meanings to make sense of your reality.

Misinterpretations occur primarily when we lack awareness of our own behavioural rules and project them onto others. In absence of better knowledge, we tend to assume, instead of finding out what a behaviour means to the person involved.

Becoming aware of our cultural dynamics is a difficult task because culture is not conscious to us. Since birth we have learned to do things at an unconscious level. Our experiences, our values and our cultural background lead us to see and do things in a certain way. Sometimes we have to step out of our cultural boundaries in order to realize the impact that our culture has on our behaviour

HOW TO MANAGE DIVERSITY

We are generally aware that the first step in managing diversity is to recognize it and learn not to fear it.

Since everyone is a product of their own culture, we need to increase both self-awareness and cross - cultural awareness. Adopting a healthy attitude towards difference helps to build bridges.

Admit that you don't know. Knowing that we don't know everything, that a situation does not make sense, that our assumptions may be wrong, is part of the process of becoming culturally aware. Assume differences before similarities.

Suspend judgement. Gather as much information as possible so you can describe a situation accurately before evaluating it.

Empathy. In order to understand another person, we need to try standing in their shoes. (See last page of intercultural terms)

Check assumptions. Ask colleagues, clients, volunteers, students for input or feedback on a regular basis.

Become comfortable with ambiguity – Assume that other people are resourceful and that learning about their cultural perspective will add to what we know.

“If we always do what we've always done, we will always get, what we always got”.

Addler, Organizational Behaviour, 1991

Intercultural sensitivity development happens through a number of predictable stages: Unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence and unconscious competence. It is supported and promoted through the learning of new categories or ways of noticing culture in everyday actions.

Stella Ting Toomey, Communicating Across Cultures, Guilford Press (1998)

REFLECTIVE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING MODEL

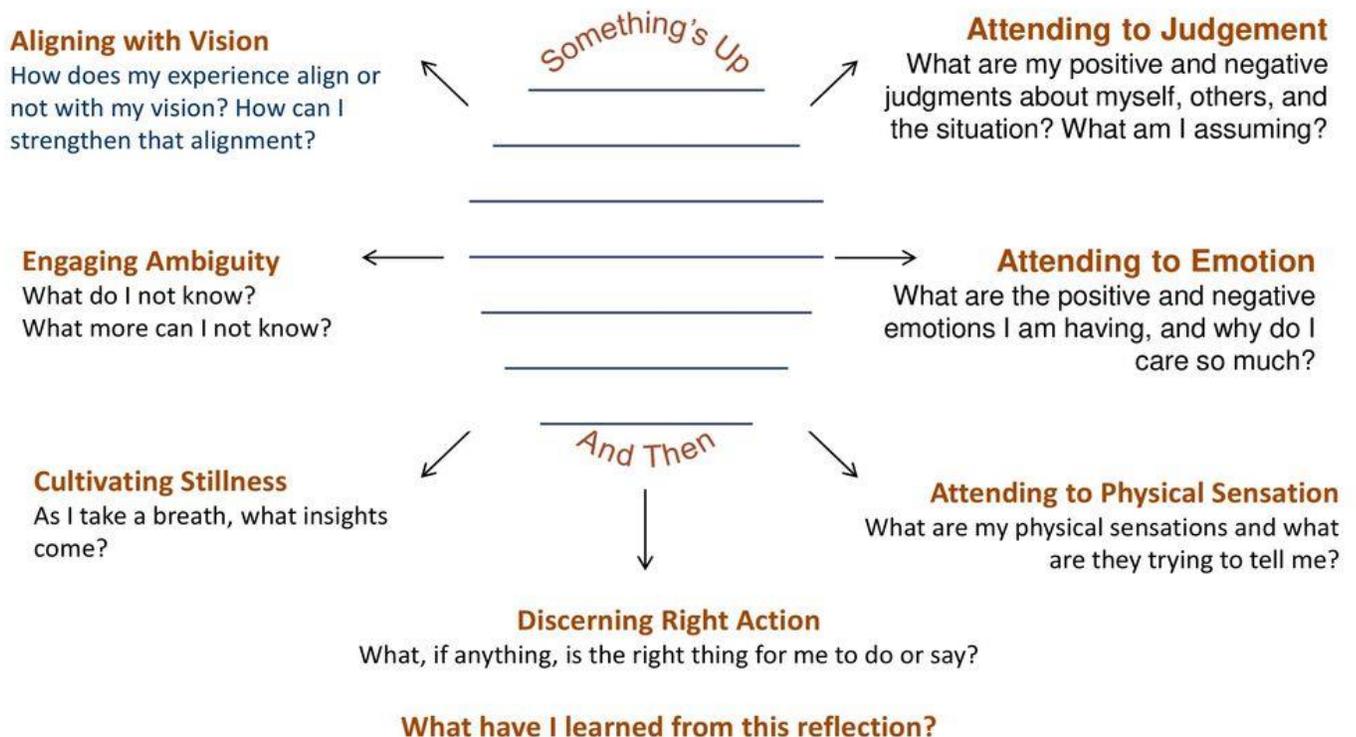
The **Reflective Intercultural Learning Model** is a **practical** and **intentional** tool. It supports working through “something’s up” moments for increasing **capacity** to work cross-culturally.

This occurs through deeper insights into observed behaviours and intentional actions guided by a **vision** (which can be personal or shared i.e. organizational). It supports the development of increased capacity to view differences through a more “complex” and therefore open lens.

This reflective cycle is based on the Personal Leadership Model developed by Schaetti, Watanabe and Ramsey. For more information go to <http://www.plseminars.com/>

“Good intercultural communication is a starting point for intercultural competence.

The Critical Moment Dialogue



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Intercultural Competence is the ability to communicate effectively and relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts. Intercultural communication refers to the communication between people from different cultures. Intercultural communication occurs whenever a message is produced by a member of one culture for a member of another culture. Because of cultural differences in these kinds of contacts, the potential for misunderstanding and disagreement is great.

To reduce misunderstandings, it is important to study intercultural communication and build cultural knowledge.”

Ngo, H. V. (2008). Cultural competence: A guide for organizational change. Calgary, AB: Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

There are three levels of awareness and learning:

MINDSET

- Cultural self – awareness
- Culture – general knowledge
- Culture – specific knowledge
- Interaction analysis

SKILLSET

- Relationship building skills
- Behavioural skills – Listening and Problem solving
- Empathy
- Information gathering skills

HEARTSET

- Curiosity
- Cognitive flexibility
- Motivation
- Open Mindedness

Bennett J. and Bennett M., Developing Intercultural Sensitivity in Handbook of Intercultural Training 3rd Ed. Landis, Bennett and Bennett (ed.) Sage Publications, 2004. Pg 149

INTERCULTURAL GLOSSARY

From Global Affairs, Canada www.International.gc.ca

ACCULTURATION The modification of a person's or a group's culture through the influence of the culture of another group.

ADAPTATION The process of accommodating to new ways of doing things by making changes in one's own behaviour and assumptions.

COLLECTIVISM Identifying with the needs of the group over the needs of the individual.

CROSS-CULTURAL The interaction, communication, or other processes between people or entities from two or more different cultures.

CULTURE The values, behaviours, practices, and assumptions we've learned from our membership in groups that share them.

CULTURAL ASSIMILATION

The greater degree of to the extent that the original culture is suppressed or a new culture is adopted. (See [ACCULTURATION](#))

CULTURE SHOCK

The discomfort experienced by people on encountering and trying to adjust to unfamiliar cultural practices.

DECODING

Uncovering the meaning within messages conveyed through culturally-determined words, gestures, timing, and context.

ETHNOCENTRIC

Seeing one's own group's way of doing things as the normal and desirable way; assessing other people's ways of doing things from the perspective of one's own values.

ETHNORELATIVE

Acknowledging that another's values and beliefs, and resulting assumptions and behaviour, are logically connected, and that there is no absolute position from which to judge morals, knowledge, and truth. [This does not imply that all cultures' practices are acceptable; only that one needs to consider cultural context when evaluating the practices encountered in another culture.]

GENERALIZE

Using a predominant characteristic of its members to describe a group without being absolute: "Canadians generally favour public funding for health care." (See [STEREOTYPE](#))

GLOBALIZATION

An expansion beyond national borders, generally of trade and commerce.

HIGH CONTEXT

Edward Hall described cultures as high- or low-context. High-context cultures rely heavily on the context of an interaction to convey the message. Words are secondary in importance. The responsibility for comprehension lies mainly with the receiver of the message, who should be attuned to the subtle messages conveyed by such markers as silence, tone, the presence or absence of significant people, etc. It is proposed within this framework that, for example, First Nations Canadians and Japanese generally value high-context communication. (See [LOW CONTEXT](#))

HUMAN NATURE

That part of our behaviour and assumptions that we inherit and share with all humans. (See [PERSONALITY](#), [CULTURE](#))

INDIVIDUALISM

The person feels independent of groups; the person's interests prevail over group interests.

INTERCULTURAL

People from different cultures interacting with each other to the extent that both are expected to make accommodations to build relationships.

LOW CONTEXT

Edward Hall described cultures as high- or low-context. Low context communication is explicit, so that all the information is directly contained in the utterances, and there is little or no implied meaning apart from the words that are being said. Within this framework, for example, Scandinavians and Swiss-Germans are generally seen to value low-context communication. (See [HIGH CONTEXT](#))

MONOCHRONIC

The tendency to see time as linear and limited, packaged into units.

MULTICULTURAL

A group comprising people from many cultures, generally in a political or geographic context.

PARTICULARISM

One of the value dimensions proposed by Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997), describing the preference for relationships over rules. Particularist societies tend to be more flexible with rules, acknowledging that in order to ensure fairness, one must take into account the unique circumstances. (See [UNIVERSALISM](#))

PERSONALITY

Our uniqueness, arising from the cultural influence of the many groups that influence us, as well as our inborn inherited tendencies and preferences. (See [CULTURE](#), [HUMAN NATURE](#))

POLYCHRONIC

The tendency to see time as circular, unlimited, able to be used for many things at once.

POWER DISTANCE

The extent to which people at the lower levels in a hierarchy accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. From sociologist Geert Hofstede's *Cultural Dimensions*.

SPECIFIC

One of the value dimensions proposed by Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997) reflecting one preference for "how far we get involved". In a specific culture, relationships are established easily but categorized into specific areas of life. Friends from work may not overlap with family friends or friends from tennis. (See [DIFFUSE](#))

STEREOTYPE

The attribution of a predominant characteristic of a group to an individual in the group without recognition of the reality of individual variation within a group.. "Lee is Canadian so we assume she favours public funding for health care." (See [GENERALIZE](#))

TRIANGULATION

In geological or physical science surveying, a technique of determining the location of an object by reference to three known locations; in cultural learning, triangulation refers to using a variety of media (people, print, literature, television) and several different sources of each before deciding the meaning of something in another culture.

UNIVERSALISM

One of the value dimensions proposed by Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997), reflecting the preference for rules over relationships. In a universalist culture, fairness is ensured by applying rules equally to everyone, regardless of relationships. (See [PARTICULARISM](#))

This Cultural Competence self – assessment tool is designed to explore individual cultural competence. Its purpose is to help you consider your awareness in your interactions with others. Its goal is to assist you to recognize what you can do to become more effective in working and living in a diverse environment.

Source: <http://static.diversityteam.org/files/414/cultural-competence-self-assessment-checklist.pdf?1342126927>

Awareness		Never	Always	Sometimes
Value diversity	I view human difference as positive and a cause for celebration			
Know myself	I have a clear sense of my own ethnic, cultural, and racial identity			
Share my culture	I am aware that in order to learn more about others I need to understand and be prepared to share my own culture			
Be aware of areas of discomfort	I am aware of my discomfort when I encounter differences in race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, language, and ethnicity			
Check my assumptions	I am aware of the assumptions that I hold about people of cultures different from my own			
Challenge my stereotypes	I am aware of my stereotypes as they arise and I have developed personal strategies for reducing the harm they cause			
Reflect on how my culture informs my judgement	I am aware of how my cultural perspective influences my judgement about what are “appropriate”, “normal”, or “superior” behaviours, values and communication styles.			
Accept ambiguity	I accept that in cross – cultural situations there can be uncertainty and that uncertainty can make me anxious. It can also mean that I do not respond quickly and take the time needed to get more information.			
Be curious	I take any opportunity to put myself in a place where I can learn about differences and create relationships			
Aware of my privilege if I am white	If I am a white person working with a person of colour, I understand that I will likely be perceived as a person with power and privilege and that I may not be seen as “unbiased”, or as an ally.			