Intercultural Group Dynamics
Purpose of this module

How to **facilitate** group dynamics to enhance an **inclusive learning environment** that leads to **meaningful** interaction and **intercultural** learning and development.
Activity 1 Constructively Creating Groups
Icebreaker Activity
Procedure

• Write your answer to the question on your sheet of paper.

• Follow the instructions: Participants are asked to do the following:
  o Take your sheet of paper and nothing else
  o Stand in a circle
  o Follow the facilitator instructions

• For the rest of this module, you will work in your new groups.

• Please be seated after the activity
Intended Learning Outcomes & Programme
Learning outcomes

1. To apply different pedagogical interventions to stimulate intercultural learning through group interaction associated with the variety of student needs and expectations in the international classroom.

2. To incorporate classroom opportunities brought by the cohort in terms of diversity in order to develop intercultural engagement.

3. To recognize varied prior knowledge from the intercultural classroom to be used as a resource for learning.

4. To identify and use intercultural incidents as opportunities for learning.
Programme for this module

• Icebreaker activity
• Programme and intended learning outcomes
• Creating student groups
  • Facilitating intercultural group dynamics
  • Creating a learning environment that supports intercultural engagement in a group setting
• Wrapping up activity
Intercultural Group Dynamics
Being aware of differences and learning from them → Self-reflection as a skill

Good excuse to rethink teaching practices

Or an opportunity?

Challenge: To engage all students
Time-lapse video sketch

Universal Social Needs

1. We need to belong
2. To exert influence
3. To give and receive affection
The Good Practice Principles

• 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.

Carroll 2015; Leask 2015
Creating Student Groups
Questions

1. In a first meeting with a culturally diverse group of students, you want to form small groups. How will you do that? Which criteria will you use?

2. How could you assign groups that support and strengthen students’ motivation?

3. If you reflect on challenges that might affect intercultural group work, what would be your top issue(s)?

4. Why is group work important for intercultural learning?
Reflection on the questions

• Take a few minutes to reflect on the issues highlighted by the questions and make notes of your thoughts in your worksheet.

• In your groups, share and compare your answers/reflections to questions 1-4.

• How would you explore/address the issues identified?

• Select a group member to write on the flip chart and orally present your results in the large group when prompted by the facilitator.
Points for further reflection

• The difference between forming groups in an intercultural and non intercultural context;
• Diverse expectations and experiences on working collaboratively in multicultural groups;
• Diverse bodies of knowledge and experience pertaining to the group’s academic project;
• The impact of assessment on the collaboration in the group;
• Other didactic interventions to enhance intercultural engagement and learning.
Contextualisation

Intercultural Competence as a Graduate Attribute
Multicultural groups

Possible functions

• Activating student learning
• Higher order learning (analysis / synthesis)
• Practising skills
• Receiving informal feedback
• Opportunity for intercultural engagement
• Sharing of prior knowledge and experience
• Sharing of culture specific knowledge and behaviours
• **Developing intercultural competence**
• Sharing of meta-knowledge about living and studying
• Social support
• Finding friends
Constructing meaning: a two way process

Communication as a joint process to negotiate shared meaning (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016:89)
An “interculturally competent” graduate

• Is able to **understand**, **evaluate** and **relate** to ambiguous and uncertain situations and to make culturally correct **attributions**.

• Realises 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 **behaviour** that fit a specific local or intercultural context.

"An intercultural interaction is seen as successful when interactants are able to develop **shared meaning**, while **acknowledging** their own and others’ sociocultural context."

*Gregersen-Hermans, 2016 p. 111*
Intercultural competence
some theoretical reminders

• A psychological construct; it can be inferred through sets of parameters (cognitions, attitudes, behaviours);
• Developmental and reflects how diversity is included in daily reality;
• Contextual, combining culture general and culture specific elements;
• Comes alive in the interaction between culturally different individuals and groups;
• Mediated through verbal and non-verbal behaviour.
An “interculturally competent” graduate

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Gregersen-Hermans, 2016 p. 111
References


**Additional References**

UNESCO have produced a resource relating to intercultural dialogue which can be found at the following link: [https://en.unesco.org/themes/intercultural-dialogue](https://en.unesco.org/themes/intercultural-dialogue)


