

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:
 - Take your sheet of paper and nothing else
 - Stand in a circle
 - 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





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

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Multicultural groups

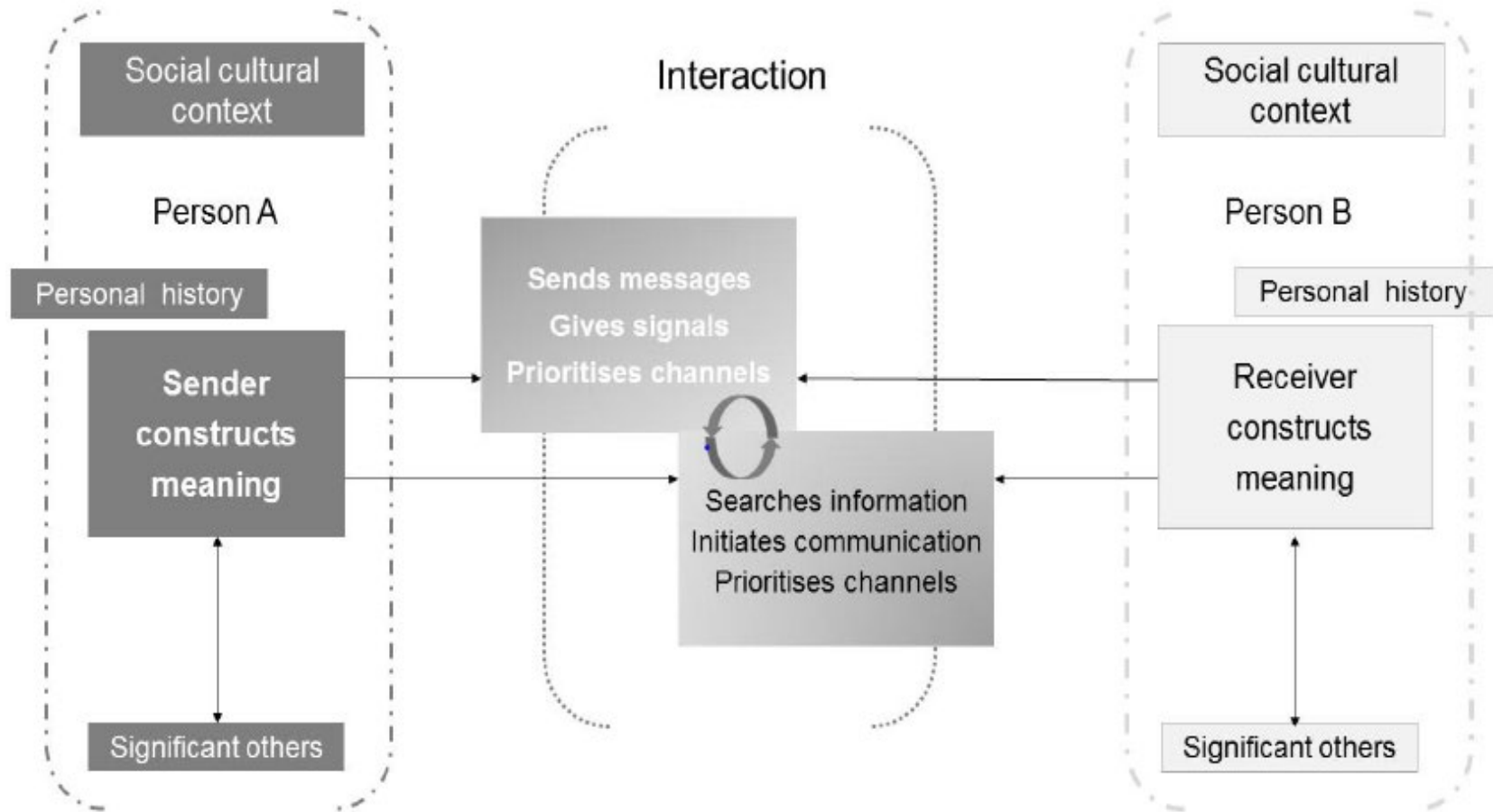
Possible functions

- 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.

Slide 20

"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.





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Slide 22

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References

Carroll, J. 2015. *Tools for Teaching in an Educationally Mobile World*. Internationalization in Higher Education Series. Routledge.

Gregersen-Hermans, J. 2016. *The Impact of an International University Environment on Students' Intercultural Competence Development*. Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.27036.28800

Leask, B. 2015. *Internationalizing the Curriculum*. Internationalization in Higher Education Series. Routledge.

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>

Cruickshank, K., Chen, H. and Warren, S. (2012) Increasing international and domestic student interaction through group work: A case study from the humanities. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 31(6), pp.797-810.

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