Intercultural Group Dynamics

Activity 4 Designing an Inclusive Learning Environment to Enhance Intercultural Learning

Programme for this module

o   Icebreaker activity

o   Programme and intended learning outcomes

o   Creating student groups

o   Facilitating intercultural group dynamics

- Creating a learning environment that supports intercultural engagement in a group setting

- Wrapping up

Slide 2

Intended learning Outcomes & The Good Practice Principles
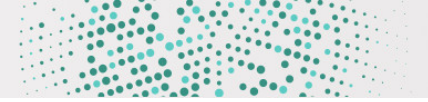
Slide 3

3

Learning outcomes (reminder)

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 international classroom to be used as a resource for learning.

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

Slide 4

The Good Practice Principles (reminder)

- 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 a learning environment that supports intercultural engagement and learning in a group setting

Slide 6

6

Students might differ as regards

A. What or how much they know about the topic (the content of the course).

B. The **disciplinary approaches** (i.e. quantitative vs qualitative methods, communication style within learning and teaching).

C. The **skills** needed (assessing the validity of source material; laboratory procedures; handling of discipline specific equipment; how to use …..).

D. Knowledge of and experience with **specific forms of teaching, learning, and assessment**.

Creating an inclusive learning environment
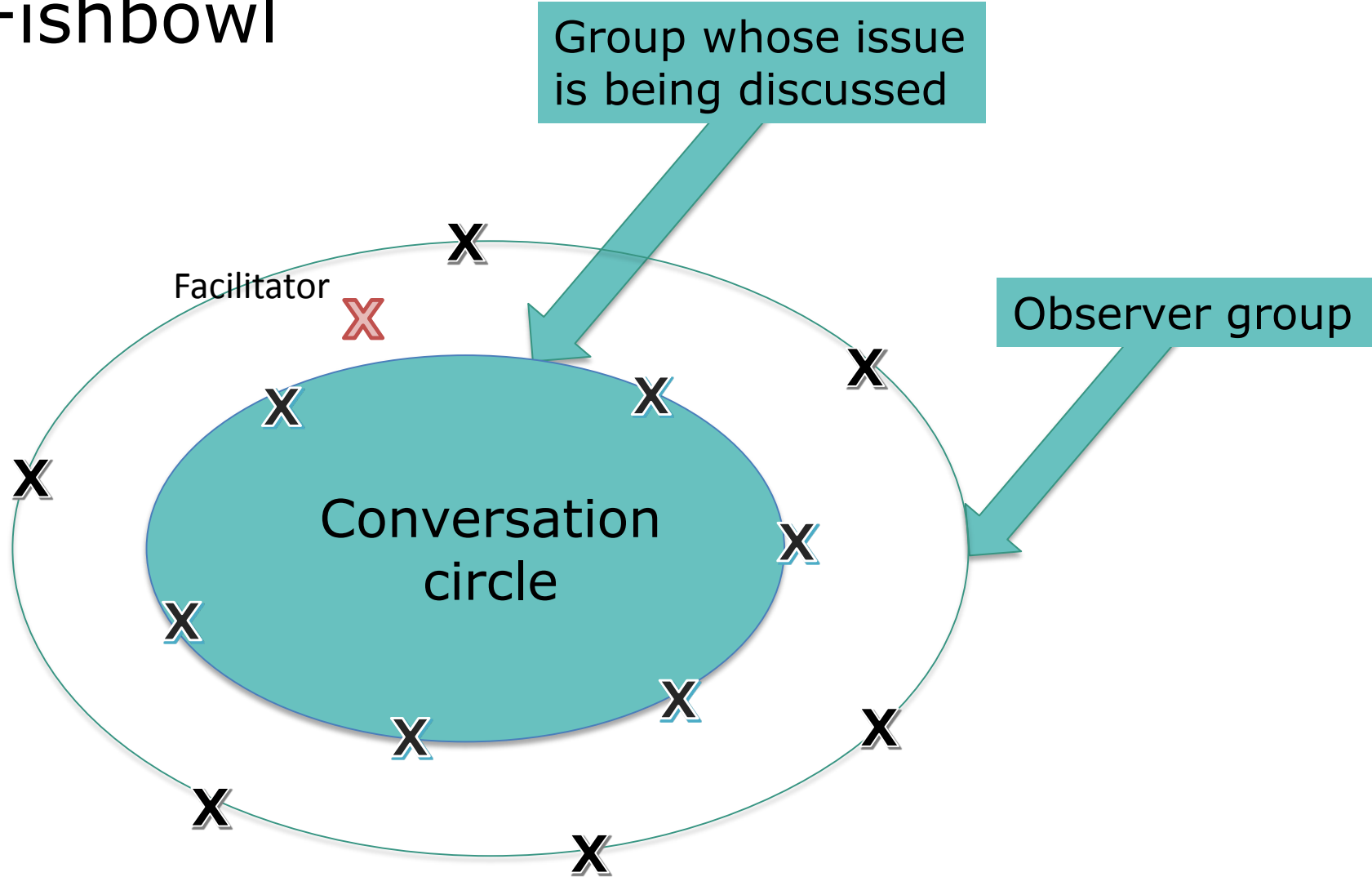
In preparation for a **fishbowl activity**:

- Each participant group is assigned an issue (A-D).

- In your group, discuss on how you would deal with the issue assigned to your group (10 minutes).

- Groups A + B form one fishbowl.

- Groups C + D form a second fishbowl.

- Each fishbowl last 10 minutes

Fishbowl

Group whose issue is being discussed

Facilitator

Observer group

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

X

Conversation circle

Fishbowl activity

Instruction

- Each participant group is assigned an issue (A-D).

- The groups take turns discussing their issue in a fishbowl.

- Two participants volunteer to start the discussion.

- When someone else from the group wants to contribute, s/he takes the place of one of the discussants. Discussion continues.

- The facilitator ends each fishbowl discussion after 10 minutes.

Students might differ as regards

A. What or how much they know about the topic (the **content** of the course).

B. The **methodologies** to be applied (frameworks for analysis within the discipline; quantitative vs qualitative methods, etc.).

C. The **skills** needed (assessing the validity of source material; laboratory procedures; handling of discipline specific equipment; how to use …..).

D. Knowledge of and experience with **specific forms of teaching, learning, and assessment**.

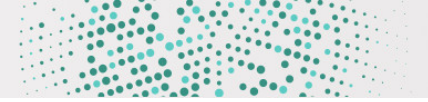# Six key points

Enhancing

Intercultural Engagment and Learning

12

1.Create a culturally rich & inclusive environment

- Co-creation of a social space with opportunities for intercultural engagement that is value based and open to change;

- An equal voice is given to all participants;

- Equally value friendship development and task performance.

2.Students' learning needs come first

- Expect and respect different starting positions as regards intercultural experience and levels of intercultural competence;

- Expect differences in learning and thinking styles, and in classroom behaviour;

- Value examples of inclusive and collaborative intercultural behaviour.

3.Facilitate intentional & guided reflection

- Pro-actively include learning activities in your curriculum design which invite students to
  - share their own cultural backgrounds, values and traditions;
  - reflect on their intercultural experience;
  - develop positive relationships within the cohort.

- Ensure appropriate cultural framing of classroom incidents to help students to
  - suspend judgement aimed at understanding the intercultural situation first;
  - understand the relative validity of one's own cultural preferences;
  - understand and reconcile culturally different view points

4.Engage in behavioural practice

- Role play new or unfamiliar behaviour

  o from simple greetings to asking questions in class, practicing restraint or being more expressive.

- Practice collaborative intercultural dialogue techniques

  o from simple to more complex questions (clarifying questions; providing feedback; expressing disagreement).

- Practice classroom engagement

  o e.g. peer groups; the fishbowl activity;
  o from safe, implicit and structured to less structured and explicit.

5.Balance challenge with social support

- Allow time for friendship development by including
  - o activities that enhance the social cohesion in the cohort in the formal curriculum;
  - o assignments that create interdependence between students.

- Reduce anxiety by
  - o supporting students with language issues and allowing extra time for studying and assessment;
  - o providing leadership with peer group power relations.

- Reduce uncertainty
  - o lowering the context of the new setting and providing information in a variety of ways.

Slide 17

6.Assessment is fundamental to learning

- Intercultural competence develops over time
  - progress is personal, based on individual learning needs;
  - learning needs to be intentional.

- Assessment FOR (not only OF) learning
  - connected to learning goals, intended learning outcomes and criteria for intercultural competence;
  - aligned to the course design;
  - embedded in the international programme

- Learning demonstrated by
  - portfolio
  - projects
  - other options?

Wrapping up Activity

Wrapping up activity: Scenario 1

You are advising a lecturer who teaches a module on care for terminally ill patients (elderly people). This is part of a Master's programme that attracts experienced nurses (w/ a bachelor degree).

The student cohort is quite diverse; approximately half of them are local, and the others come from a range of different countries.

The lecturer is aware that this is a topic with many culture (incl. religion) based differences and expectations, and s/he has addressed these differences in the course module.

Wrapping up activity: Scenario 2

So far, assessment of the course has focused on the appropriate care for the patient without taking into account the students' ability to deal with any cultural or religious issues that might have surfaced in the process, but the lecturer wants to include these aspects in assessments in the future.
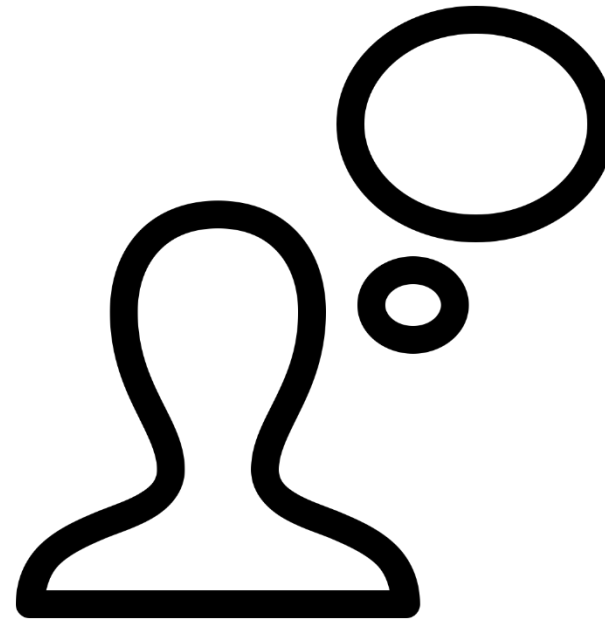
Do you have any suggestions for how that may be done?

Wrapping up activity

In your learning portfolio, reflect briefly on what you take away from this module and how you may use that in your own local context.

Fishbowl activity - debriefing

Instruction **| Think – pair – share**

- Why is the fishbowl activity well suited to organising a discussion in a diverse group of students?
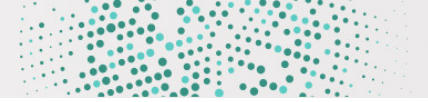
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Gregersen-Hermans, J. 2016. *The Impact of an International University Environment on Students' Intercultural Competence Development*. Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.27036.28800

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

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