

Unit 1 – Constituent Elements of ICC

Recommended duration: 7 hours

Description: In this unit, learners are introduced to the notions culture and intercultural competences. Further, constituent elements of ICC are introduced, namely, knowledge, skills, and attitude. These elements are further broken down and examined in separate unit topics, which are supplemented by comprehension and reflexion activities. Finally, the intercultural development continuum demonstrates how gradual the process of the acquisition of ICC is.

Methods: For each topic, a variety of methods and tools are recommended to be used. To start, a warm-up activity is designed to set the context of the topic (quote or discussion question) and/or test the learners' prior knowledge of that particular subject. After that, the main content of the topic is presented by means of text/reading paragraphs, diagrams, and illustrations. Comprehension and "Think and discuss" questions are recommended during parts of the main content and after it. Next follows the reflection in the form of discussion questions. Finally, each topic ends with links to additional materials, resources, and videos that could be used according to adult educators' needs.

At the end of the unit, learners may complete a self-evaluation form in order to reflect on their progress and comprehension of the material of the unit.

What is culture and intercultural competence?

▣ Warm-up

"Every human is like all other humans, some other humans, and no other human" – Clyde Kluckhohn

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots" – Marcus Garvey

"You have to maintain a culture of transformation and stay true to your values" – Jeff Weiner

"Differences simply act as a yarn of curiosity unraveling until we get to the other side" – Ciore Taylor

**The stranger sees only what he knows
– African proverb**

"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are" – Anonymous

Look at these different quotes about culture and think about what they mean. Do you agree with any of them?

More quotes can be found at [this](#) reference.

Learn***Intercultural communication?***

Because of the significance intercultural communication has acquired in recognizing the world's cultural diversity, effective ICC has become a priority today. International employment, immigration, urbanization, study exchange programs, and the ease with which people of various cultural backgrounds can travel internationally are all promoting regular communication between people of various cultural backgrounds. The ability to decode other cultures in a reasonable and meaningful way depends on both an inclusive and pluralistic mindset and self-cultural awareness.

Learning from alternative visions of epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and worldviews will broaden a culture's horizons and enrich its intellectual and spiritual resources when it is objectively conscious of its own strengths and limitations.

References with more information:

- [View of A 21st Century Imperative: integrating intercultural competence in Tuning | Tuning Journal for Higher Education](#)
- [Communication Between Cultures, 8th ed. \(utalenta.com\)](#)
- [Intercultural competences: conceptual and operational framework; 2013 \(qvsu.edu\)](#)

**Think and discuss: Why is ICC important to You?*****But what is culture?***

Since all communication takes place within a culture, the primary barrier to intercultural communication is cultural differences. Different cultures have different languages, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes toward things like time (how important is punctuality), context, traditions, distance, nonverbal signals, and so on. The most critical factor in successful intercultural communication, according to employers and business owners, is language. Language and culture are thought to be inextricably linked. There is a lot of discussion in academia about whether culture shapes language or language shapes culture. The secret to effective intercultural exchange is to be open-minded, responsive to new cultural knowledge, avoid prejudices, and value differences.

References with more information:

- [What Is Culture? Definition, Meaning and Examples | Live Science](#)

**Think and discuss: How has your country's language shaped your culture?**

The different kinds of cultures and communication styles



Predict: **How do you think cultures could be categorized?**

Miscommunication is one of the main sources for conflict between nations, regions, or even within family. The following explanation of different communication styles will clarify how communication problems may arise. Below you will find the main verbal communication styles that have been identified in Intercultural Communication Studies:

- direct / indirect communication style
- elaborate / succinct communication style
- personal / contextual communication style
- instrumental / affective communication style

These styles can be found in all cultures, and the use of different styles varies depending on the situation and context. Culturally, one style might be considered more appropriate than the other in a given situation.

Direct / indirect communication styles

Both the speaker and the listener expect simple (explicit) verbal expression of intentions, desires, expectations, and so on in a **direct** communication style (e.g., “I am hungry”, “I love you”). In **indirect** communication, the speaker communicates his or her thoughts through hints or modifiers rather than directly expressing them (e.g., “perhaps”, “maybe”). The listener is required to note and observe nonverbal communication, as well as read contextual signals, in order to grasp the true meaning.



Think and discuss: **In your culture do people communicate directly or indirectly?**

Elaborate / exact / succinct communication styles

The amount of speech and expressiveness are criteria for the elaborate, exact, and succinct communication styles. Talkativeness and rich language are characteristic for everyday discussions in the cultures of the Middle East, for instance. Metaphors, idioms, and proverbs are common.

The exact communication style is mostly common in North American and North European cultures. Neither more nor less information is required to communicate a message – the speaker just uses those words, which describe exactly his or her intention. No additional words or paraphrases are required. Of course, within cultures there are contextual and individual variations.

In the succinct style, the verbal message is considered as only a part of the message. Lot of information is transmitted via silence, indirectness, understatements and pauses. The succinct communication style is typical of the Japanese culture.



Think and discuss: **Which of these communication styles is used in your culture?**

Personal / contextual styles

Personal communication style is informal and emphasizes the individual and equal relationships. The person-centeredness is reflected by using the pronoun *I*. The **contextual** style is status and role oriented. It often emphasizes formality and difference of power between people. Personal pronouns are not often used, and not all information needs to be clearly expressed.

The contextual communication style is particularly prevalent in Japanese, Chinese and Indian cultures. They adjust the conversation style using social roles. Different status is taken into account to help decide the level of formality to be used. Cultures that use a personal style are less formal, focus on the individual and disregard status differences.



Think and discuss: **Is the style of communication in your culture more personal or contextual?**

Instrumental / affective styles

Individualism and collectivism, on the one hand, and low- and high-context approaches, on the other, may be linked to instrumental and affective communication styles. **Instrumental** communication focuses on the speaker and is task-oriented; **affective** communication focuses on the listener and is process-oriented. Explicitness (instrumental style) and implicitness (affective style) are the two terms used in this context. In particular in the Western world, the instrumental style is increasingly becoming the style of international business and other technical contexts.

References with more information:

- [Intercultural Communication Styles \(uiowa.edu\)](http://uiowa.edu)
- [Differences in communication styles between cultures - GRIN](#)



Think and discuss: **How close is your culture's communication style to the instrumental style?**

ICC and its constituent elements

ICC is individuals' active possession of qualities that lead to successful intercultural communication. It can be described in terms of three primary attributes: expertise, skills, and attitudes.

Attitudes: respect, openness, and curiosity/discovery are key attitudes required for efficient intercultural communication. Active listening, consideration for others, and demonstrating that they are respected and supported are all crucial in building long-term relationships with people who hold opposing views and values. The ability to step outside of our comfort zone is referred to as openness and curiosity.

Knowledge – when we refer to culture, defined as the beliefs, values and norms of a group of people, that influence individuals' communication behaviours, more categories of knowledge can be considered: sociolinguistic awareness, cultural self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, and deep cultural knowledge.

Skills: listening, observing, analyzing, assessing, interpreting, and relating are the primary abilities used for processing the acquired knowledge. Critical self-reflection is also essential for the growth of intercultural competence.

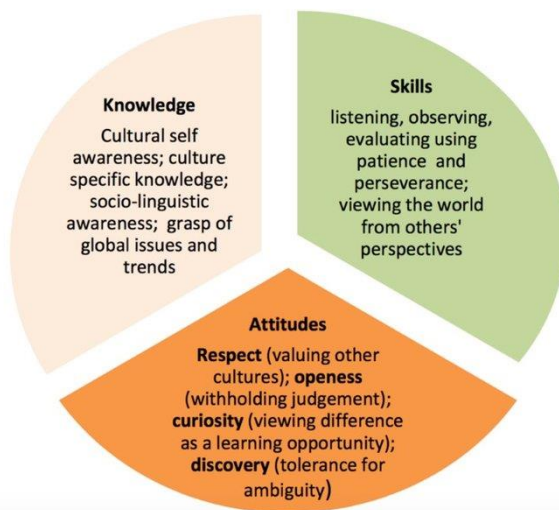
Internal Outcomes: when the primary elements of attitudes, knowledge, and skills are acquired, internal outcomes, such as empathy, flexibility, and adaptability will also be achieved. As a result, individuals will become able to respond to the other person according to his/her expectations. The effectiveness of communication would be the result of the extent of skills and knowledge acquired.

External Outcomes: the attitudes, knowledge, and skills, and the internal outcomes would lead to efficient intercultural communication behaviours.

References with more information:

- [Theoretical Framework – Spaces for Intercultural Learning \(interculturalproject.com\)](http://interculturalproject.com)

Constituent elements of intercultural competence
(Adapted from Deardorff, 2006)



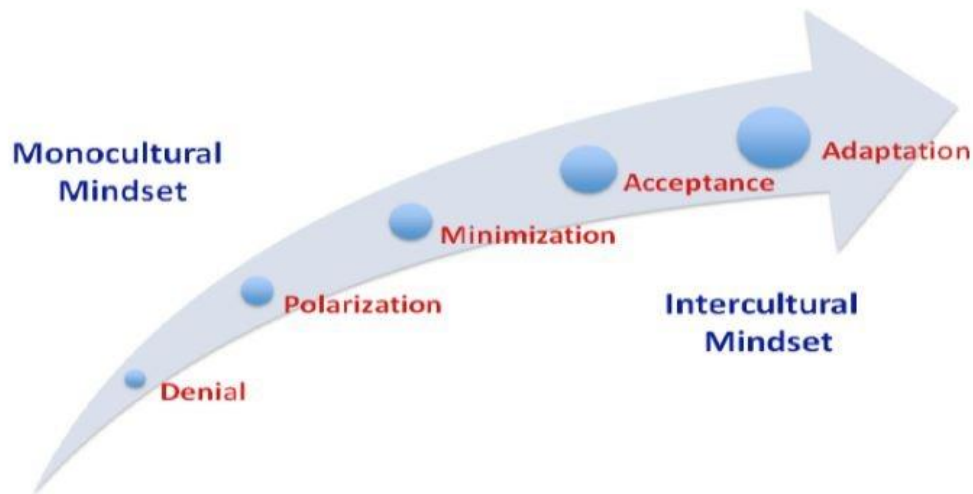
Think and discuss:

Is any constituent element of ICC more important than the rest?

Which element is the most difficult to master?

Intercultural development continuum

Intercultural Development Continuum



Source: *Intercultural Development Inventory (2019)*

References with more information:

- [The Intercultural Development Continuum \(IDC™\) | Intercultural Development Inventory | IDI, LLC \(idiinventory.com\)](https://idiinventory.com/)



Describe each step of the intercultural development continuum and its characteristics.

Answer questions

1. How would you define intercultural competence?
2. What is culture?
3. How can we distinguish different communication styles?
4. What are constituent elements of ICC and what do they refer to?
5. What are the steps from a monocultural mindset to an intercultural one?

Reflect

- Think about your own experience in developing ICC. When did you first realize the need for ICC?
- Have you ever experienced the stages of Intercultural Development Continuum? Describe what it was like and what it took to develop your ICC skills.

Learn more

Links to all mentioned sources and additional materials:



- [View of A 21st Century Imperative: integrating intercultural competence in Tuning | Tuning Journal for Higher Education](#)
- [Communication Between Cultures, 8th ed. \(utalenta.com\)](#)
- [Intercultural competences: conceptual and operational framework; 2013 \(gvsu.edu\)](#)
- [What Is Culture? Definition, Meaning and Examples | Live Science](#)
- [Intercultural Communication Styles \(uiowa.edu\)](#)
- [Differences in communication styles between cultures - GRIN](#)
- [Theoretical Framework — Spaces for Intercultural Learning \(intercultproject.com\)](#)
- [The Intercultural Development Continuum \(IDC™\) | Intercultural Development Inventory | IDI, LLC \(idiinventory.com\)](#)

Videos:

- [Intercultural Communication - YouTube](#)
- [Cross cultural communication | Pellegrino Riccardi | TEDxBergen - YouTube](#)
- [Intercultural Communication - Jandt \(7\) - What are the Dimensions of Culture? - YouTube](#)

Knowledge as a constituent element of ICC

▣ Warm-up

Look at these different quotes about knowledge and think about what they mean. Do you agree with any of them?

“The man who asks a question is a fool for a minute, the man who does not ask is a fool for life” – Confucius

“To know that we know what we know, and to know that we do not know what we do not know, that is true knowledge” – Nicolaus Copernicus

▣ Learn

Elements of knowledge

In the previous topic, we looked at what intercultural competence is, and what its constituent elements – knowledge, skills, and attitude – are. Deardorff explained ICC as an ability “to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behavior and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions” (Deardorff, 2006). In this topic, we will focus on *knowledge* as part of ICC.

Knowledge consists of four elements:

1. **Cultural self-awareness:** how our own culture affects our own identity and world view.
2. **Culture-specific knowledge:** how much we know about other cultures, i.e., their history, values, politics, communication styles.



3. **Sociolinguistic awareness:** our skills in the local language, verbal and non-verbal communication, adjusting our speech to accommodate people from other countries.
4. **Grasp of global issues and trends:** our sense of globalization, its implications, and our ability to relate local issues to global trends.



Think and discuss: **Can you explain these four elements in your own words?**

In order to develop intercultural competence, the first step is to know oneself and understand one's cultural identity. Cultural self-awareness is the ability to understand how one's culture affects behavior, identity, and point of view. Only through self-awareness are people enabled to understand the world from other cultural perspectives or other world views when learning culture-specific knowledge of other groups. Culture specific knowledge is the profound understanding of ideas, customs, and social behaviors of other cultural communities. Socio-linguistic awareness is particularly important because knowing when certain local verbal or body language is appropriate allows people to communicate more effectively. Finally, a grasp of global issues and trends can explain behaviors and customs by relating and comparing our native behaviors and customs to global forces.

References with more information:

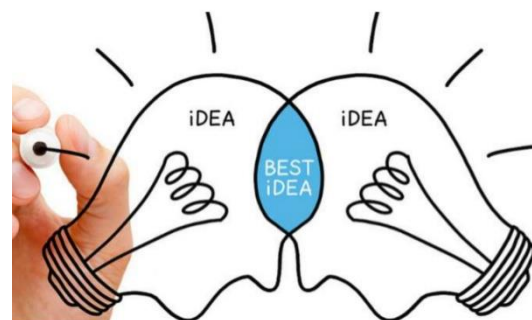
- [Deardorff, D. K. \(2006\), The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education 10:241-266](#) *ibid*

Knowledge acquisition – individual vs. collaborative learning

The learning process can often be simplified to keeping track of an individual's progress. However, in intercultural learning, for creating concepts for social transformation, the collaborative learning of the group is more important. Where one person may lack knowledge or skills, another one bridges the gap and facilitates effective cooperation. Collaborative learning is a process or the educational approach of using groups to enhance learning through working together.

So, when speaking of intercultural learning, we can say it is an example of collaborative learning where the participants represent different cultural backgrounds. By sharing and comparing knowledge, ideas, and experiences, the group can engage in brainstorming and create new concepts that are more than the sum of the ideas of individuals.

Collaborative Learning Environment



Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/rneedham91/collaborative-learning-objectives>



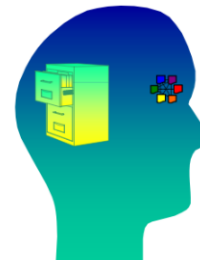
Think and discuss: **Have you experienced the benefits of collaborative learning?**

Knowledge acquisition – from monological to triological learning

One of the developers of the triological learning approach, Kai Hakkarainen, identifies three different metaphors that describe various learning approaches. (Hakkarainen & Paavola 2009).

– Monological approach or knowledge acquisition metaphor.

Here, knowledge is shared one way, from the facilitator to the learner, taking place in the mind of the learner. In intercultural learning, the knowledge acquired can be about the beliefs, values, customs, and norms of different cultures.



Source: <http://www.intercultproject.com/theoretical-framework>



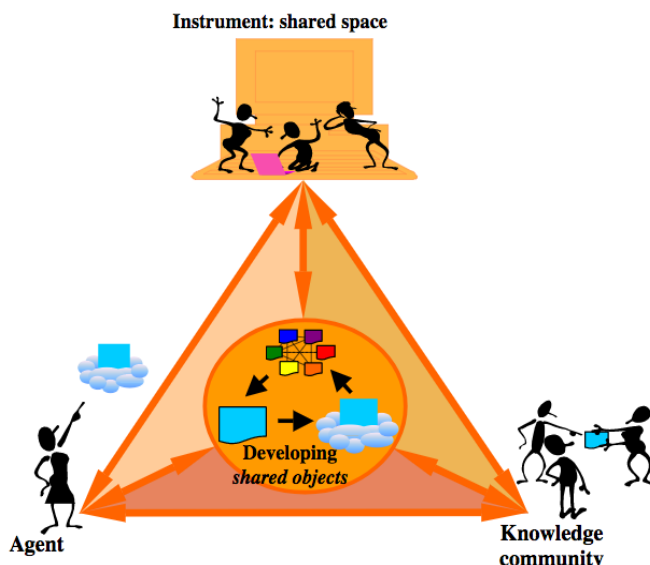
– Dialogical approach or participation metaphor.

According to this approach, knowledge-sharing is a two-way process between the facilitator and the learner: both of them are learning from each other's skills and knowledge. An example of this approach could be building relationships and networks by engaging in respectful dialogue within different cultural settings.

Source: <http://www.intercultproject.com/theoretical-framework>

– Triological approach or knowledge-creation metaphor.

This approach to learning is a combination of the above-mentioned approaches with a third element added. Learning takes place within the minds of the individual participants or agents (monological approach), between the participants as a knowledge community when they share experiences and ideas (dialogical approach), and finally, as a result of sharing, participants collaborate to create new concepts or new knowledge "objects" to help them face social and global challenges.



Source: <http://www.intercultproject.com/theoretical-framework>

References with more information:

- [Hakkarainen, Kai & Paavola, Sami. \(2009\). TOWARD TRILOGICAL APPROACH ON LEARNING. Theoretical Framework — Spaces for Intercultural Learning \(intercultproject.com\)](#)

Answer questions

1. What are the elements of knowledge?
2. How does triological learning compare to collaborative learning?
3. What are the similarities and differences between Kim's ICC framework and Deardorff's ICC components?

Reflect

- Which learning approach is best when acquiring knowledge about other cultures?
- What has been your experience with the above-mentioned knowledge acquisition approaches?

Learn more

- [Deardorff, D. K. \(2006\) , The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education 10:241-266](#) *ibid*
- [Hakkarainen, Kai & Paavola, Sami. \(2009\). TOWARD TRILOGICAL APPROACH ON LEARNING. Theoretical Framework — Spaces for Intercultural Learning \(intercultproject.com\)](#)
- [HUANG Yunlong \(2014\). Cross-Cultural Communication, 10\(1\), 97-101](#)
- [Kim, Y. Y. \(2001\). Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. SAGE Publications, Inc.](#)

Videos:

- [Let's talk about Understanding other Cultures - YouTube](#)
- [Learn a new culture | Julien S. Bourrelle | TEDxArendal - YouTube](#)

Skills as a constituent element of ICC**Warm-up**

Look at these different quotes about culture and think about what they mean. Do you agree with any of them?

“All skills are learnable.” – Brian Tracy

“Skills make you rich, not theories.” – Robert Kiyosaki

Learn

Elements of skills

What kind of skills do we need in order to become more interculturally competent? According to Deardroff (2006), they are the following:

1. **Listening, observing, evaluating:** using patience and perseverance to identify and minimize ethnocentrism, to seek out cultural clues and meaning
2. **Analysing, interpreting and relating:** seeking out links, causality, and relationships by using comparative techniques of analysis
3. **Critical thinking:** viewing and interpreting the world from other cultures' point of view and identifying one's own

As Deardroff (2006) put it herself when writing about the findings of her study, "One surprising result of this study was the specific skills that emerged through consensus, which included skills to analyze, interpret, and relate, as well as skills to listen and observe. Cognitive skills emerged, including comparative thinking skills and cognitive flexibility. These skills point to the importance of process in acquiring intercultural competence and the attention that needs to be paid to developing these critical skills."

References with more information:

- [*Deardorff, D. K. \(2006\), The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education 10:241-266*](#) *ibid*



Think and discuss: **Is there a skill element that is more important? If so, which?**

Answer questions

1. What are the elements of skills?
2. What are the categories of the behavioral dimension, according to Kim?

Reflect

- Which type or category of ICC skills do you think you are best at? How did you develop those skills?

Learn more

- [*Deardorff, D. K. \(2006\), The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education 10:241-266*](#) *ibid*
- [*HUANG Yunlong \(2014\). Cross-Cultural Communication, 10\(1\), 97-101*](#)
- [*Kim, Y. Y. \(2001\). Becoming intercultural: An integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. SAGE Publications, Inc.*](#)



Attitude as a constituent element of ICC

Warm-up

Look at these different quotes about culture and think about what they mean. Do you agree with any of them?

“Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude.” – Zig Ziglar

“It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome.” – William James

Learn

Elements of attitude

Attitude describes how one feels or what one thinks about something or someone. It also includes a way a person might deal with situations emotionally, and it is often reflected in how a person behaves. It may take a considerable amount of time and effort to develop or adjust a person’s attitude, especially to change it after it’s been formed for a long time. Moreover, it is difficult to measure people’s feelings and perceptions about something, as well as it is difficult to measure the change in people’s attitudes as a result of training.

According to Deardorff (2006), these are the elements of attitudes:

1. **Respect:** valuing cultural diversity, thinking comparatively and without prejudice about cultural differences
2. **Openness:** withholding criticism of other cultures, collecting ‘evidence’ of cultural difference, being open about the possibility of being proven wrong
3. **Curiosity:** looking for intercultural interactions, viewing difference as a learning opportunity, being aware of one’s own ignorance
4. **Discovery:** tolerating ambiguity and viewing it as a positive experience, willingness to step outside one’s comfort zone

References with more information:

- [Deardorff, D. K. \(2006\), The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education 10:241-266](#) *ibid*

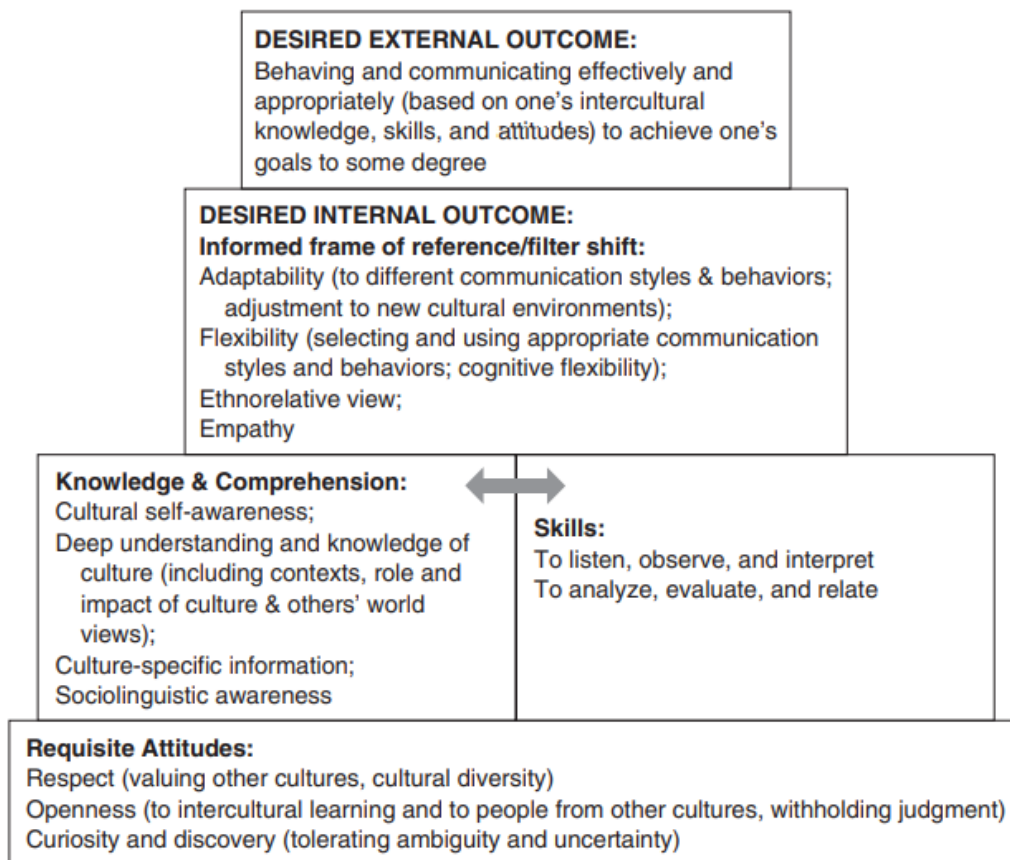


Think and discuss:

What would be a way to measure someone’s attitude towards other cultures?

Attitudes in ICC and conclusion

Let us look at Deardorff's (2004) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence:



As we see in this pyramid, attitude is a fundamental starting point when gaining intercultural competence. It has also been referred to as the affective filter. Lynch and Hanson (1998) highlighted the central role of attitude in ICC when they wrote,

"After all the books have been read and the skills learned and practiced, the cross-cultural effectiveness of each of us will vary. And it will vary more by what we bring to the learning than by what we have learned."

Okayama, Furuto, and Edmondson (2001) contributed to the significance of attitude's fundamental importance by noting that:

"what may be most important is . . . to maintain culturally competent attitudes as we continue to attain new knowledge and skills while building new relationships. Awareness, the valuing of all cultures, and a willingness to make changes are underlying attitudes that support everything that can be taught or learned."

References with more information:

- Deardorff, D. K. (2004). [The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of international education at institutions of higher education in the United States](#). Unpublished dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

- Lynch, E. W., & Hanson, M. J. (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with children and families*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brookes/Cole.
- Okayama, C. M., Furuto, S. B., & Edmondson, J. (2001). Components of cultural competence: Attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In R. Fong & S. B. Furuto (Eds.), *Culturally competent practice: Skills, interventions, and evaluations* (pp. 89-100). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.



Think and discuss:

Do you agree that the element of attitude is the fundamental part of ICC?

▣ Answer questions

1. What are the elements of attitude?
2. How does Kim describe the dimension of attitude (affection)?

▣ Reflect

- How do you interpret Deardorff's Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence?
- What has been your experience with attitude in your intercultural competence development?

▣ Learn more

- [*Deardorff, D. K. \(2006\), The Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization at Institutions of Higher Education in the United States, Journal of Studies in International Education 10:241-266*](#) *ibid*
- Deardorff, D. K. (2004). [The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of international education at institutions of higher education in the United States](#). Unpublished dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.
- Lynch, E. W., & Hanson, M. J. (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with children and families*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brookes/Cole.
- Okayama, C. M., Furuto, S. B., & Edmondson, J. (2001). Components of cultural competence: Attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In R. Fong & S. B. Furuto (Eds.), *Culturally competent practice: Skills, interventions, and evaluations* (pp. 89-100). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Videos:

- [*Other Cultures Open New Eyes | Jean Vanhoegaerden | TEDxHultAshridge - YouTube*](#)

