

# BEYOND DIFFERENCES: TO AN ENRICHED PERSPECTIVE.

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## INTRODUCTION

The CHARM-EU universities send about 10.000 students on exchange per year. We wish to offer them an intercultural awareness course by the alliance. Our universities already offer courses about practical things, but not all students attend any course in intercultural awareness, and we like to raise the awareness among the students.

This poster presents the short version module that offers students a basic level of intercultural awareness in a one-hour video format, previously built as a presentation.

## OBJECTIVE

The objective of this poster is to present the structure of the short-version module of Intercultural Communication. Hence, we will address the four objectives of the module, as follows: 1) to develop awareness of intercultural differences and commonalities; 2) to share and reflect on examples and challenges of intercultural encounters; 3) to develop self-awareness regarding cultural values, norms, and beliefs; and 4) to navigate cultural differences effectively.

The main idea of the module is to understand cultural structures that include (but are not limited to): time, space, verbal and non-verbal communication, categorization, and stereotyping, among others.

## METHODOLOGY

This poster is part of the building process that included all the members of the different universities involve in the KCT on Intercultural Awareness. Nonetheless, the methodology we include in this poster refers exclusively to the one followed within the final short version module. Therefore, we highlight the structure of the course with a particular attention to "rich points", also known as critical incidents, the DIVE model (i.e., description, interpretation, verification, and evaluation), aimed at postponing judgement, and Kolb's learning circle.

## MODULE - UNDERSTANDING AND NAVIGATING INTERCULTURALITY:

A SHORT ONLINE PREPARATION COURSE FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS.

## COURSE CONTENT:

01. What is culture and intercultural communication
02. Cultural norms and structures
03. Rich points and cultural incidents
04. Stereotypes
05. Some reflection tools: DRIVE model & Kolb's learning cycle



## CULTURAL STRUCTURES

- **Time:** Punctuality, polychrony vs monochrony, short vs long orientation
- **Space:** Personal space, physical contact, lay-out room (e.g. office)
- **Verbal communication:** language: Language choice, loudness of voice, high and low context
- **Non-verbal communication:** Facial expressions, eye contact, gestures
- **Etiquette:** Salutations, presents, food, taboos
- **Hierarchy (power distance)**
- **Individualism versus collectivism:** Loss of face, harmony
- **Work versus leisure & uncertainty avoidance**

## Three dimensions INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



- 01.** Communication between people with different linguistic and/or cultural backgrounds.
- 02.** Communication in which linguistic and/or cultural differences are made relevant for processing the outcomes of interlingual communication.
- 03.** The essence of intercultural communication is characterized here by the transformation of thinking and acting as a consequence of interaction.

## RICH POINTS!

How do you react to something strange or unexpected?

- 01** You wait until the situation passes
- 02** You copy the behaviour of the other (do as the natives do)
- 03** You perceive it as a stereotype of the other culture and/or confirmation/deviation of the other culture.
- 04** Your incomprehension is the start of a process of 'wondering'; you compare your own culture with the other and start reflecting and analysing.

## REFLECTION DI(V)E MODEL



**Description:** What do I see / what do I hear?

**Interpretation:** What does it seem like?

**Verification:** Is my interpretation correct?

**Evaluation:** How do I feel about it?

N.B. Don't start with the evaluation!

Blocks and threats

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- **Blocks:** focus on the differences/cross cultural boundaries. *Example:* "Ah, you are from Italy, so you must really miss a hot meal during lunch!"
- **Threads:** focus on the similarities, the things you have in common. *Example:* "Ah, I see you are also into yoga, how long have you been practicing?"

## REFERENCES

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