

# Intercultural competences in university education

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*Erasmus*

# Aims

- Implementation of intercultural competences in teaching (15-20 mins)
- Q&A; Discussion

# Relevance of intercultural competences in our teaching

1. EUR-students will need intercultural competences in their future work
2. Many courses have an international and intercultural character  
(e.g. *Intercultural Communication, IBCoM, BA-1*)



## Start of thinking in more detail about ICC:

- Course objectives *Intercultural Communication*  
*[...] Students have developed the ability/ propensity to:*  
apply and reflect on their intercultural competences
- SKO (Senior Kwalificatie Onderwijs)

# Intercultural competences

- Traditional models of ICC competence
- Alternative frameworks
  - Constructionist
  - Critical dialectical

# ABC approach

<u>Affective</u> <i>Attitudes – Heart</i>	<u>Behavioral</u> <i>Skills – Hand</i>	<u>Cognitive</u> <i>Knowledge – Head</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open-mindedness</li><li>• Willingness to communicate</li><li>• Empathy</li><li>• Curiosity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social skills</li><li>• Communicating skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Language proficiency</li><li>• Self-knowledge</li><li>• Cultural knowledge</li></ul>



# Intercultural communication based on ABC approach

*“two (or more) interactants come to an encounter, characterized by their cultural differences, and through accommodation and mutual display of the ABC’s, they achieve shared meaning, mutual understanding, and arrive at a mutually satisfying relationship”*

(Kupka et al., 2007, as cited in Martin & Nakayama, 2015, p. 17)

ABC approach often used in, for instance, global business literature;

‘cultural difference’ then often conceptualized as ‘national difference’

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# Constructionist approach

- Individuals *co-construct* culture and arrive at shared meanings
- An ongoing process
- Better to adapt than learn fixed aspects
- (Self) Reflexivity

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# **Intercultural competences :**

‘Increasing cultural self-awareness’

‘Recognizing own norms and values’

(documents on intercultural competences from The Higher Education Academy; Wageningen University; Leiden University)

**Course objectives Intercultural Communication**  
*[...] Students have developed the ability/ propensity to apply intercultural competences, specifically self-reflexivity of how they are immersed themselves in processes of intercultural communication and situated in diverse cultural contexts [...]*

## Critical dialectical approach

Not only individual characteristics ('ABC' models) or individual reflexivity (constructionist approach)

→ But also an emphasis on the social and historical forces that influence and constrain intercultural communication (e.g. relations of power in society; institutions).

*We are already positioned in many ways before we enter an experience of intercultural communication*



**Course objectives Intercultural Communication**  
*[...] Students have developed the ability/ propensity to: apply and reflect on intercultural competences, specifically self-reflexivity of how they are immersed themselves in processes of intercultural communication and situated in diverse cultural contexts and in power relations*

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# Implementation Intercultural competences assignment (since 2016)

- ✓ Students write a 500 words essay in which they reflect on how their intercultural competences have developed over their first year at IBCoM
- ✓ The reflection must be based on a personal experience and connected to at least one theoretical concept from the literature

## Example reflection from a student

*“One important idea that the course of Intercultural Communication has taught me is that banal nationalism and stereotyping can easily and effectively affect the way society judges and treats other individuals (Piller, 2011).*

*In my personal case, I can think of myself as a tolerant and open-minded individual. Nevertheless, and as much as I try not to do so, pre-established and stereotyped concepts of other cultures and ethnicities still affect the way I perceive people when I first meet them. ...*

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*..For instance, this year I've had the opportunity to meet a German student who would later become more than just my friend. I would have expected from him to be extremely organized and punctual, which is considered a very common and accepted German stereotype. Nevertheless, it turns out that I can be "more German" than him in many different aspects, especially in the aforementioned ones."*

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# Intercultural competences integrated within IBCoM

Yr 1: Introduction to Human Communication; Intercultural Communication

Yr 2: Internship report

Yr 3: Exchange report; Communication Ethics