

Diversity inclusive communication and cooperation

"Cultures don't meet, people do"

Edwin Hoffman

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Program

- 09.30 Welcome and introduction.
- 09.35 Input: What is intercultural communication?
- 10.00 Breakout-session: *My personal coat of arms*.
- 10.40 Input: Inclusive communication (1).
- 11.00 Break.
- 11.10 Input: Inclusive communication (2).
- 11.30 Breakout-session: *Cultural habits at work*.
- 12.00 Application of the TOPOI-model on a case study.
- 12.20 Plenary questions.
- 12.30 Closure of the workshop.

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A culturalistic approach of intercultural interactions: *culturalism*

People are seen only as representing their national, ethnic or religious group (not as unique individuals).

People's behaviour and attitudes are attributed to their culture or religion *and* considered to be only cultural or religious (though there may be other grounds).

This can lead to (often negative) stereotyping and generalizing.

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'Culture'? 'Intercultural communication'? Zooming in – zooming out

Culturalistic approach of a conversation = zooming out from the concrete conversation and the interlocutors to national-, ethnic-, religious-, geographic-cultures; to civilisations; to western-/non-western-, collectivistic-/individualistic-, cold/hot climate-, passive-/active... cultures.

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Culturalistic approach of intercultural competence

The national, ethnic or religious background of a person is the most important characteristic of a person's identity *and* the main explanation for her or his behaviour.

Intercultural Competence: Knowledge of the characteristics of the national (ethnic, religious) cultural background of the person.

E.g: G. Hofstede, F. Trompenaars, E. Meyer, R. Lewis, ...

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Geert Hofstede (1980, 2010; <https://www.hofstede-insights.com>)

Cultural Dimensions	Denmark	Sweden	Italy	Austria	France	UK	Belgium	Serbia	Germany
1. Individualistic/Collectivistic	74	71	76	55	71	89	75	25	67
2. Power-distance	18	31	50	11	68	35	65	86	35
3. Uncertainty-Avoidance	23	29	75	70	86	35	94	92	65
4. Masculine/Feminine	16	5	70	79	43	66	54	43	66
5. Long term/short term	35	53	61	60	63	51	82	52	83
6. Indulgence/	70	78	30	65	48	69	57	28	40

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Risks of a culturalistic approach of intercultural communication

- Reduces a person to only her/his national, ethnic, religious or 'colour' identity.
- A person is considered as only a product of culture; not also as producer of culture (*fundamental individuality* of each person).
- Culturalises all kind of differences and makes behavior extra-ordinary different (exoticism).
- Focuses only on differences, not on what people also have in common.
- Generalises and stereotypes ('we' versus 'them') and so it easily leads to a fight for adaptation
- Takes you out of your power and balance *and* it takes the other person also out of her/his power/balance.
 - Culture can be used as a legitimization, justification, an excuse.

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An Inclusive Systemic approach

Each person is part of many collectives (social systems): groups of people with a shared, partial commonality and common habits.

Every collective is characterised by a certain culture.

- *Culture*: a social order of habits that characterizes a social group or a social interaction.
- *Content of a culture*: language, knowledge, symbols, rituals, heroes, values and norms.
- Culture ranges from a first encounter between two people, to a social group, to a highly developed, large-scale society.

There are as many cultures as there are social groups and successful social interactions.

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Culture

Culture in its most elementary form is created in a social interaction as a shared social order of habits to make meaningful interaction, communication, cooperation possible. (Jan Blommaert 2015)

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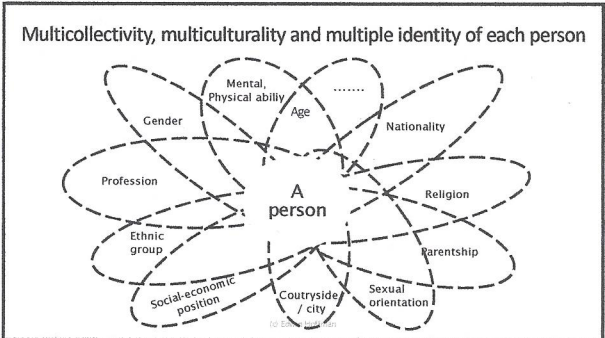
Intercultural communication (Rathje, 2009)

Intercultural is *NOT* a collision between cultures, but a missing link in the interaction between *people* because of unfamiliar differences.

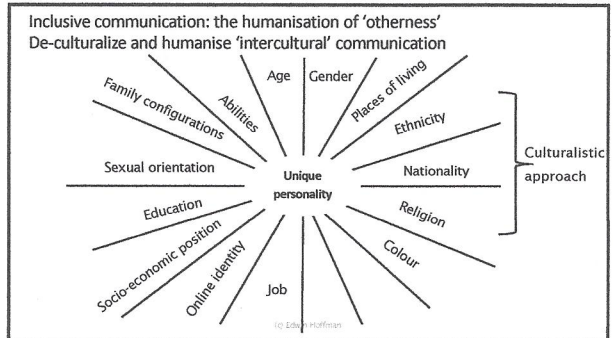
Experience of strangeness: no normality, no common habits.

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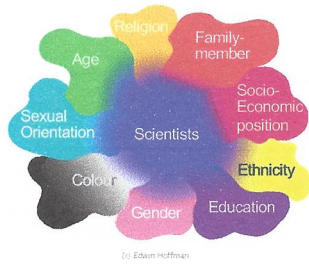


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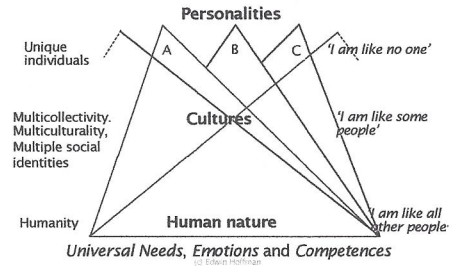
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Consider identity as multiple and as 'a moveable feast' (S. Hall, 1992)



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It is the person acting not the culture.
 "Cultures don't meet, people do." (E. Hoffman 2018)



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Be true to who you are.

- Be unconcerned, authentic: have trust in yourself.
- Decisive in the communication is your dedication, respect, openness and sincerity. 'Mistakes' can be made. Work with the effects of your communication.

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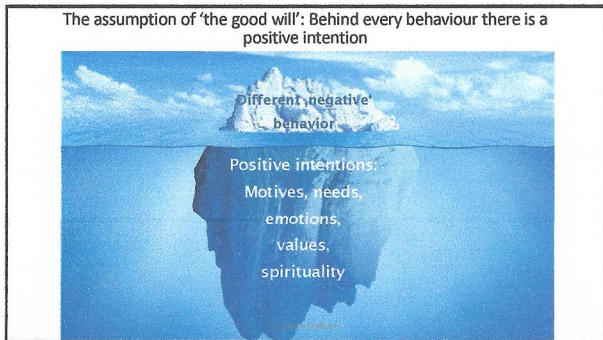
Be prepared and open for differences, surprises.

The TOPOI-model (E. Hoffman, 2018)

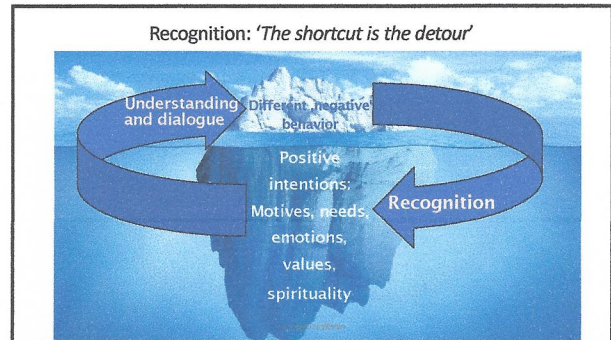
Tongue (Taal)	The verbal and non-verbal language: communicationstyles, politeness, feedback, connotations, interaction-rules, topics, ... Bodylanguage, greetings, eye-contact, distance, silence, time, clothing, socially accepted behaviour, ...
Order (Ordering)	The view and logic: different views of humanity, of life, of the world, on the issues at hand,... Different ways of reasoning: holistic, analytical; deductive, inductive, ...
Persons (Personen)	The identities, roles and relation: Images, face and honour, masculinity/femininity, gender-equality, status, collectivism/individualism, trustbuilding, powerdistance, ...
Organization (Organisatie)	The organizational and societal context: Legislation; political-, socio-economic context, procedures, rules,, facilities, functions, leadership styles, team composition, decisionmaking, the agenda, the room, available time ...
Intentions (Inzet)	Motives, emotions, needs, values, spirituality.

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Good will? (Barbara Schmerlaib)

"When my husband, my little son and I visited our friend Hassan in Oman four years ago, I met some of Hassan's friends. Many of them shook hands with my husband in friendship, but not with me. Some of them did not even look me in the eye. The first time, it was very uncomfortable for me and it also felt disrespectful."

„Talking about it with Hassan, it turned out that his friends were very respectful and did not want to embarrass my husband by looking at me or touching me. So these were positive reasons why the men did not shake my hand or look me in the eye. I only saw the tip of the iceberg, the "negative behaviour" and saw this as the truth, was irritated and judged their behaviour negatively. The motivations of the men, their "good will" came to the surface in the dialogue with our friend Hassan."

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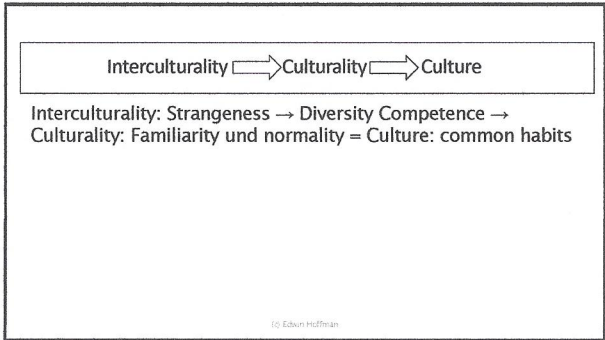
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Diversity competence (S. Rathje 2006:14, E. Hoffman & A. Verdooren 2018)

The ability to transform experiences of strangeness - due to unfamiliar differences - into normality (familiarity) and thus, to create a common ground (a culture) and connection for further communication, interaction, cooperation or further living together.

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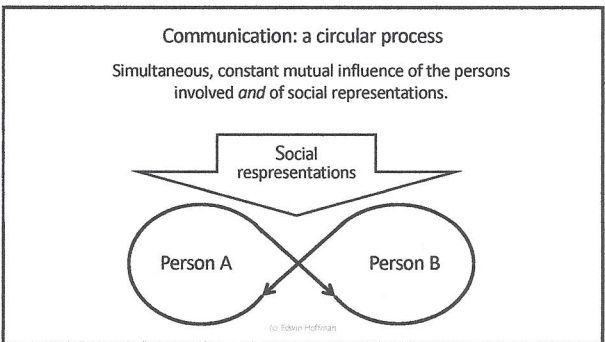
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Work circular

Reflect in the communication: What is my share? What is the share of the other person. What is the influence of the social representations?

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Social representations

The prevailing collectively shared and created common images (prejudices, stereotypes), perceptions, knowledge, norms *and* the experiences of a collective.

„In what we say to each other and understand from each other, our personal past and our collective pasts also play a role.“ (Glenn Heiberg - psychiatrist)

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Influence of current and historic social representations

'You have to adapt like all the others'

The Dutch society and the Dutch-Surinam colonial history

'Black' Afro-Surinamese	'White' Dutchman
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The university

Student - Janitor

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The TOPOI-model aims at

Zooming in with the TOPOI-lens on the conversation and the context to reflect on the possible differences and misunderstandings in communication.

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Tongue
Verbal and nonverbal language?

Order
Views and logic?

Intentions
Motives, needs, emotions, values?

TOPOI

- Each person's share?
- The influence of social representations?

Organisation
Organizational and societal context?

Persons
Identities, roles, images and relationship?

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Tongue
What is each person saying?
What does everyone's body language express?

Order
What is everyone's view and thinking on the issue at hand?

Intentions
What motivates each person? What are everyone's motives, emotions, needs, values?

Organisation
What situational, organisational and societal factors play a role?

Persons
How does each see the other and how do they experience the mutual relationship?

Influence of social representations?

The TOPOI-lens

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Application of the TOPOI-lens on a Dutch case study from a tutor of a BA Study *Human Resource Management* of a Dutch university.

A Surinamese-Chinese student in the third semester of the BA Study *Human Resource Management* has a slightly physical disability. She is not assertive. In student groups she doesn't say much, and she is withdrawn. She finds it hard to participate in discussions, to say her opinion and to be critical towards colleague-students. She tells me; she is not happy about that herself. My colleague professors fear that she is not competent for the study *Human Resource Management* and that she will fail for her internship that is coming up.

I asked her whether her lack of 'assertivity' is due to her culture. The student confirmed this and felt relieved. She said that it is impossible for her to be assertive at home. I then ended the conversation.

This case study poses me for a major dilemma: on one side the BA Study program finds it crucial that all students have a critical and assertive attitude. On the other side to be assertive conflicts with the culture of this Surinamese-Chinese student and may be also with that of all other international students.

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TOPOI Analysis Intervention

Tongue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggestive questions? - Meaning of 'assertiveness' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open ended questions. - Explore and explain the meaning.
Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A cultural issue or a common issue of a study issue? - Influence of social representations: 'You must respect other cultures' and 'No discrimination'? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See and name the issue within the context of the university as a common study issue. - Becoming aware of this social representation and its pressure.
Persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surinamese-Chinese, a daughter or a student? 	<p>Within the context of the university: address her as a student.</p>
Organisation	<p>The context, in which the student is not assertive/is assertive: fellow students, teacher-student interaction, didactic methods, learning environment, ...?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explore the contexts.
Intentions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positive intention of the tutor: respect? - Student: 'she is not happy about that herself'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Becoming aware of the effect of his intention. - Explore the meaning of her statement.

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*"There is no method,
only attention"*

Jiddu Krishnamurti



"Perhatian"

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