Incorporating Intercultural Awareness Into Language Education

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"Our generation's greatest challenge... is learning to live in a crowded and interconnected world that is creating unprecedented pressures on human society".

Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, BBC Reith Lectures

1
What is culture?

Big C:

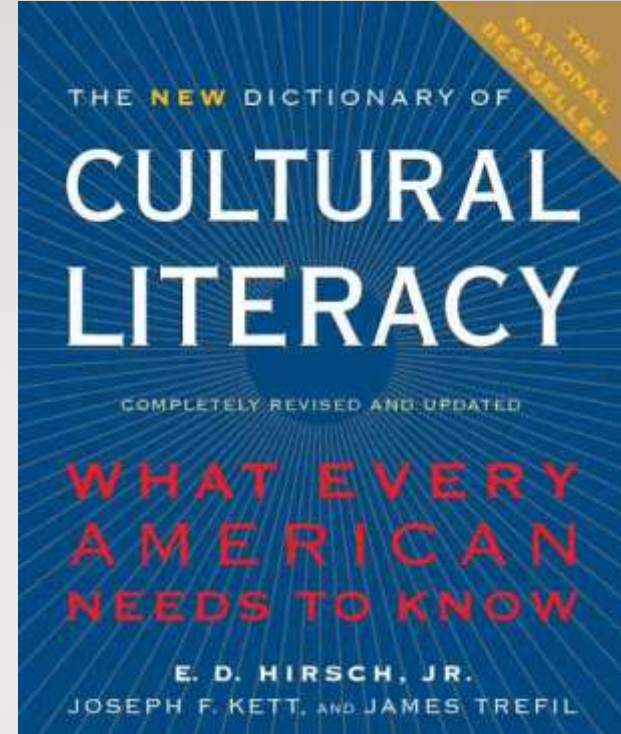- Achievement culture
  - Shakespeare, Mozart
  - Opera, Art

Small c:

- Behavioural culture
  - Belief systems
  - Assumptions
  - 'How we do things around here'

from: Cultural awareness, Tomalin & Stempleski

5Cs OF CULTURE

- Cultural knowledge

- Cultural behaviour

- Cultural values & attitudes

- Cultural preferences

- Cultural adaptation

"One of the key 21st century skills is *global awareness* ….the ability to understand and address global issues, to learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue"

TIRF, 2009:51

2
Inter-cultural awareness

'Why, in 2014, can an American still genuinely offend a Brit by not buying a round, or a Brit offend a South Korean by handling his business card too casually?' *The Guardian*

"And sometimes when I go back to France, in the supermarkets, for example, I say to myself 'they are so rude' because they never say 'sorry' " (*Laure*)

Key issues:

- Self-awareness

- Respect

- Values

- Space

- Courtesy

- Register

INTERCULTURAL INTERSECTION

Culture 1 believes smoking in restaurants is…

Culture 2 believes it is …

	Culture 1	
Culture 2	*Acceptable*	*Unacceptable*
Acceptable	C1 and C2 both think it's acceptable	C2 thinks it is acceptable but C1 finds it unacceptable
Un-acceptable	C2 thinks it's unacceptable, but C1 finds it acceptable	C1 and C2 both think it's unacceptable

ARE YOU A PEACH OR A COCONUT?

In '**peach**' cultures like the USA or Brazil people tend to be friendly with new people - they smile frequently at strangers …..BUT…

In '**coconut**' cultures such Russia and Germany, people are initially more closed off - they rarely smile at strangers…. BUT….

'*Coconuts* view 'peaches' as insincere, because their surface effusiveness doesn't signify deep friendship.
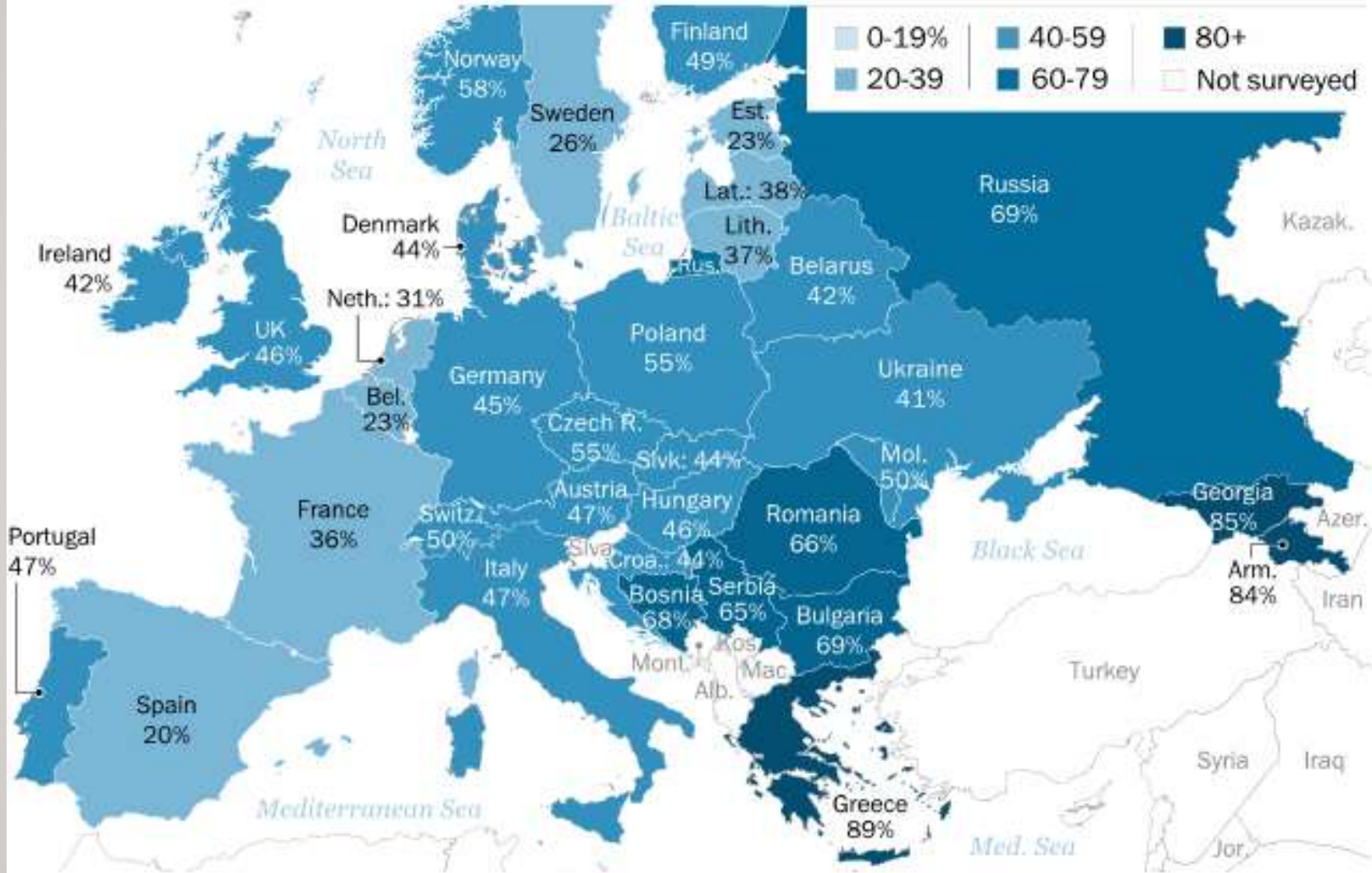
Peaches see 'coconuts' as rude, refusing to oil the wheels of life with a few pleasantries.

It's all relative: the British are *coconuts* in California but *peaches* in Paris.'

Eastern Europeans are more likely to regard their culture as superior to others

% who say they completely/mostly agree with the statement, "Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others"
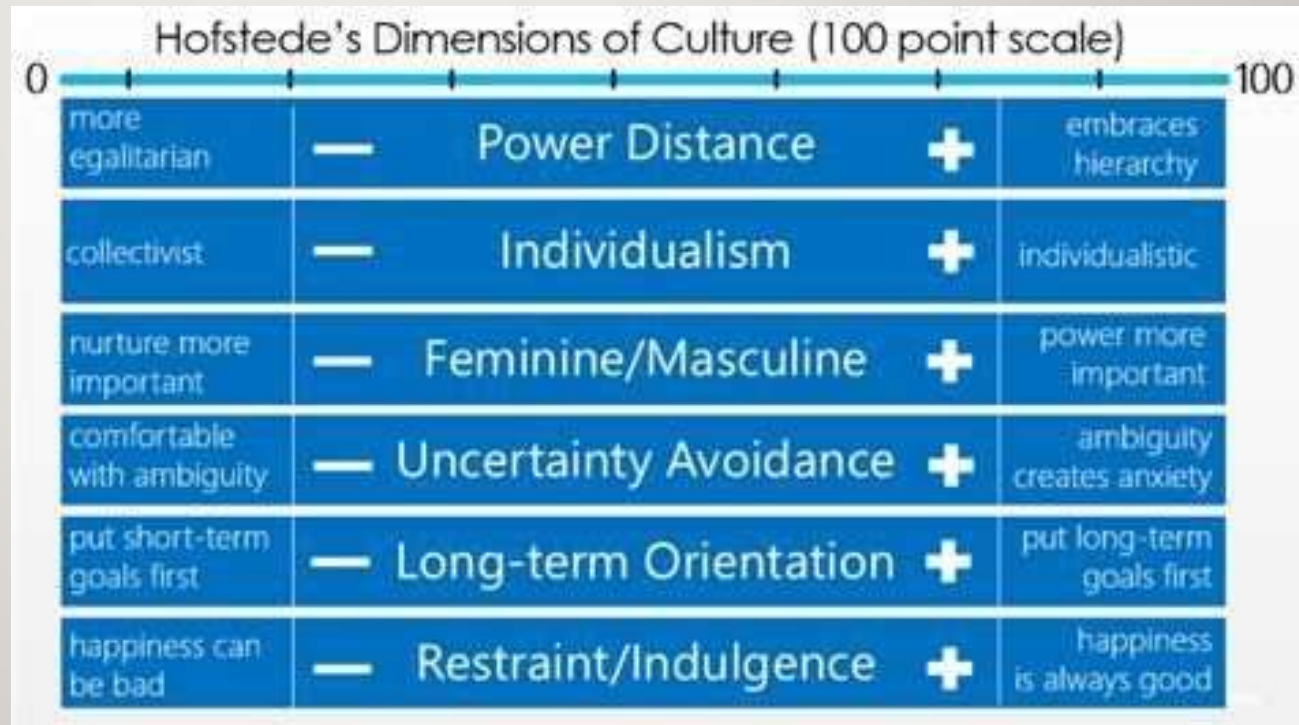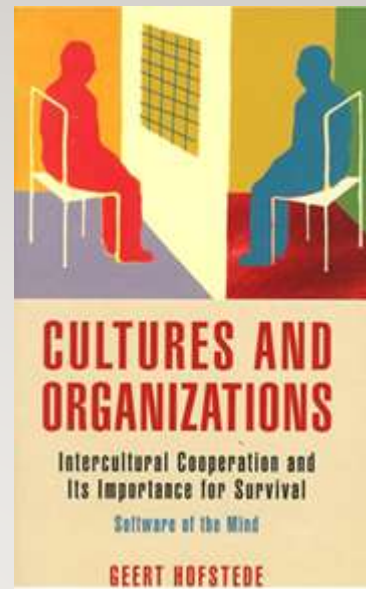

Legend:
- 0-19%
- 20-39
- 40-59
- 60-79
- 80+
- Not surveyed

Country values shown on map:
- Finland 49%
- Norway 58%
- Sweden 26%
- Est. 23%
- Russia 69%
- Lat.: 38%
- Lith. 37%
- Belarus 42%
- Denmark 44%
- Ireland 42%
- Neth.: 31%
- UK 46%
- Poland 55%
- Ukraine 41%
- Germany 45%
- Bel. 23%
- Czech R. 55%
- Slvk: 44%
- Mol. 50%
- France 36%
- Switz. 50%
- Austria 47%
- Hungary 46%
- Romania 66%
- Georgia 85%
- Portugal 47%
- Italy 47%
- Slva
- Croa. 44%
- Bosnia 68%
- Serbia 65%
- Bulgaria 69%
- Arm. 84%
- Mont.
- Kos.
- Mac.
- Alb.
- Spain 20%
- Greece 89%

3 Intercultural theorists

CULTURES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Intercultural Cooperation and
Its Importance for Survival

Software of the Mind

GEERT HOFSTEDE

Hofstede's Dimensions of Culture (100 point scale)

| 0		100
more egalitarian	— **Power Distance** ✚	embraces hierarchy
collectivist	— **Individualism** ✚	individualistic
nurture more important	— **Feminine/Masculine** ✚	power more important
comfortable with ambiguity	— **Uncertainty Avoidance** ✚	ambiguity creates anxiety
put short-term goals first	— **Long-term Orientation** ✚	put long-term goals first
happiness can be bad	— **Restraint/Indulgence** ✚	happiness is always good

POWER DISTANCE INDEX

Egalitarian

- Few status differences
- Informal social relations
- Superior can be questioned
- Little respect for old age

Hierarchical

- Many status differences
- Formal social relations
- Deference for superiors
- Great respect for old age

Geert Hofstede

CULTURE MAPPING - MEYER
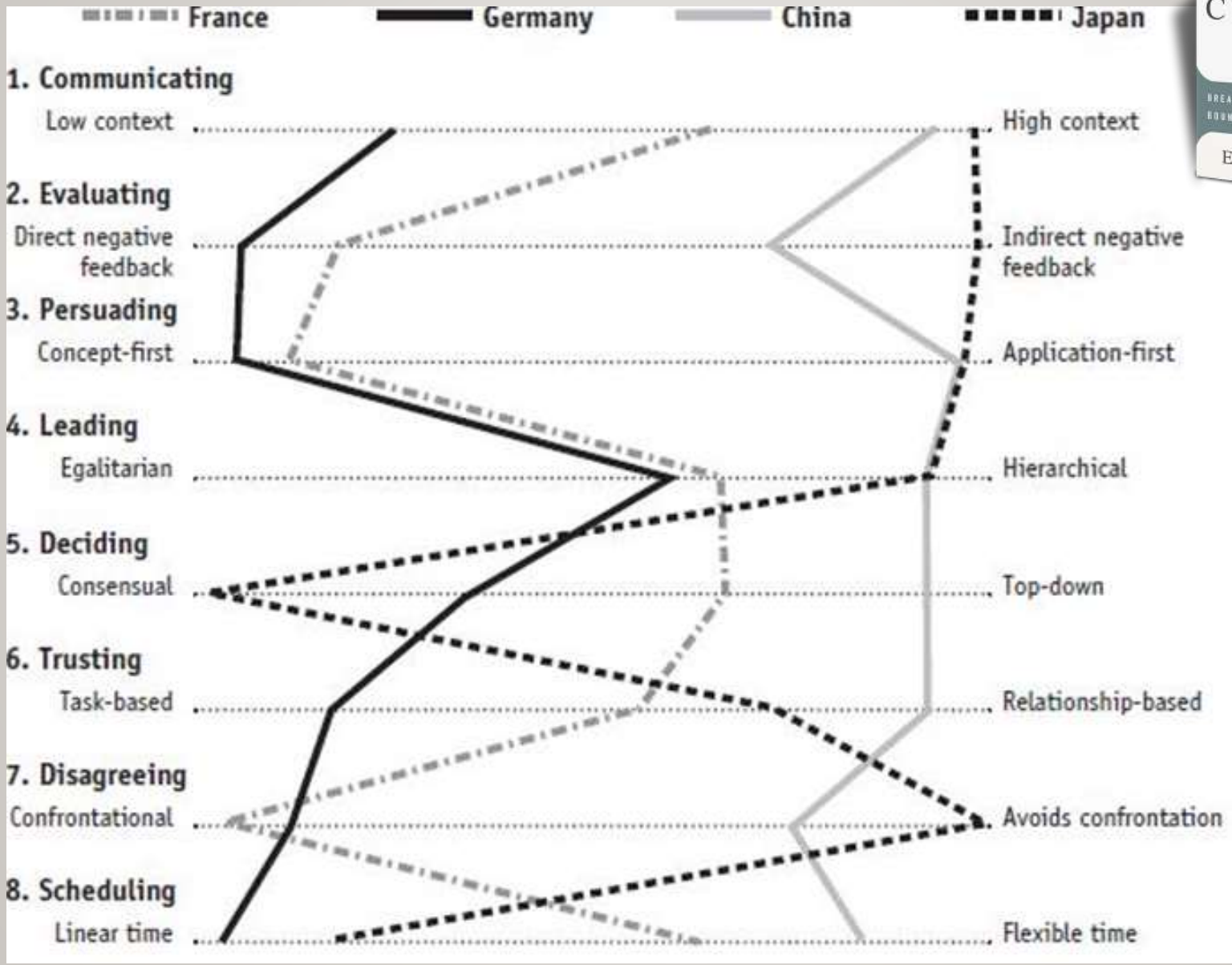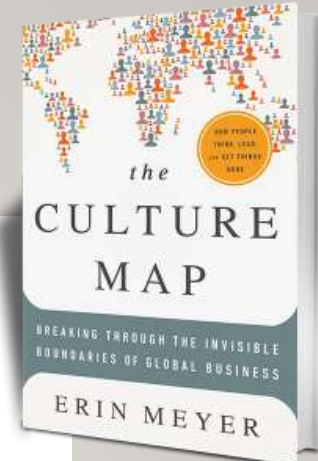
CULTURE COMPASS

Careernomics self-test 39€

Scores

Your scores are only an approximation on Hofstede's dimensions, especially because models describing differences among cultures should not be used to describe differences among personalities; group reality doesn't equal individual reality. The textual feedback on the previous page(s) contains the most valuable information.
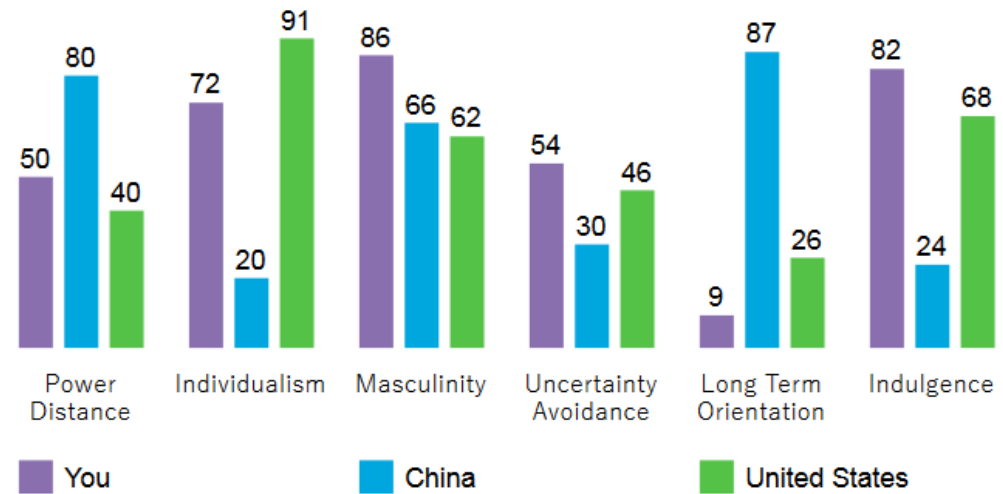
In addition to your country of interest and your home country, the table below lists the 5 countries scoring most similar to you and the 3 countries scoring most different to you. But also here, treat these scores with caution.

	Power Distance	Individualism	Masculinity	Uncertainty Avoidance	Long Term Orientation	Indulgence
Your score	**50**	**72**	**86**	**54**	**9**	**82**
China	80	20	66	30	87	24
United States	40	91	62	46	26	68
Most similar						
South Africa	49	65	63	49	34	63
Australia	36	90	61	51	21	71
United States	40	91	62	46	26	68
Ireland	28	70	68	35	24	65
Trinidad and Tobago	47	16	58	55	13	80
Most different						
Ukraine	92	25	27	95	55	18
Guatemala	95	6	37	99	—	—
Belarus	95	25	20	95	56	18

SWITCH FROM NATIONS TO CONCEPTS

Key concepts/continua:

- Power Distance index

- Uncertainty avoidance

- Individualism vs group

- High/low context

- Time constructs: precise vs flexible

- Power vs nurture

- Task vs relationship

- Trust vs law

INCA FRAMEWORK - BYRAM

Tolerance of ambiguity	Able to tolerate and manage ambiguity
Behavioural flexibility	Able to adopt appropriate behaviour to match situation
Communicative awareness	Able to understand the impact of cultural differences on the communication process and adapt accordingly
Knowledge discovery	Knowledge of and research into other cultures
Respect for otherness	Respect for diversity in value systems, equal treatment of diversity
Empathy	Ability to appreciate others' perceptions and needs and to act to optimize communication

Intercultural Competence Assessment Project, EU

4 Interculture at work

INTERCULTURAL WORK COMPETENCES

- Respectful
- Multilingual
- Flexible
- Builds trust
- Understands cultural differences
- Accepts differences
- Adjusts communication
- Aware of own culture
- Tolerates ambiguity
- Adapts to different cultures
- Works in diverse teams
- Open to new ideas

RESPECTFUL
MULTILINGUAL
FLEXIBLE
BUILDS TRUST
ACCEPTS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
UNDERSTANDS CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
ADJUSTS COMMUNICATION
AWARE OF OWN CULTURE
TOLERATES AMBIGUITY
WORKS IN DIVERSE TEAMS
CONTINUOUS LEARNER
OPEN TO NEW IDEAS
ADAPTS TO DIFFERENT CULTURES
LISTENS AND OBSERVES

Culture at Work, British Council

BRITISH COUNCIL

CULTURE AT WORK

The value of intercultural skills in the workplace

INTERCULTURAL SKILLS FOR MOBILITY

Chart 5: The importance of intercultural skills to organisations (by country, ranked by very important)
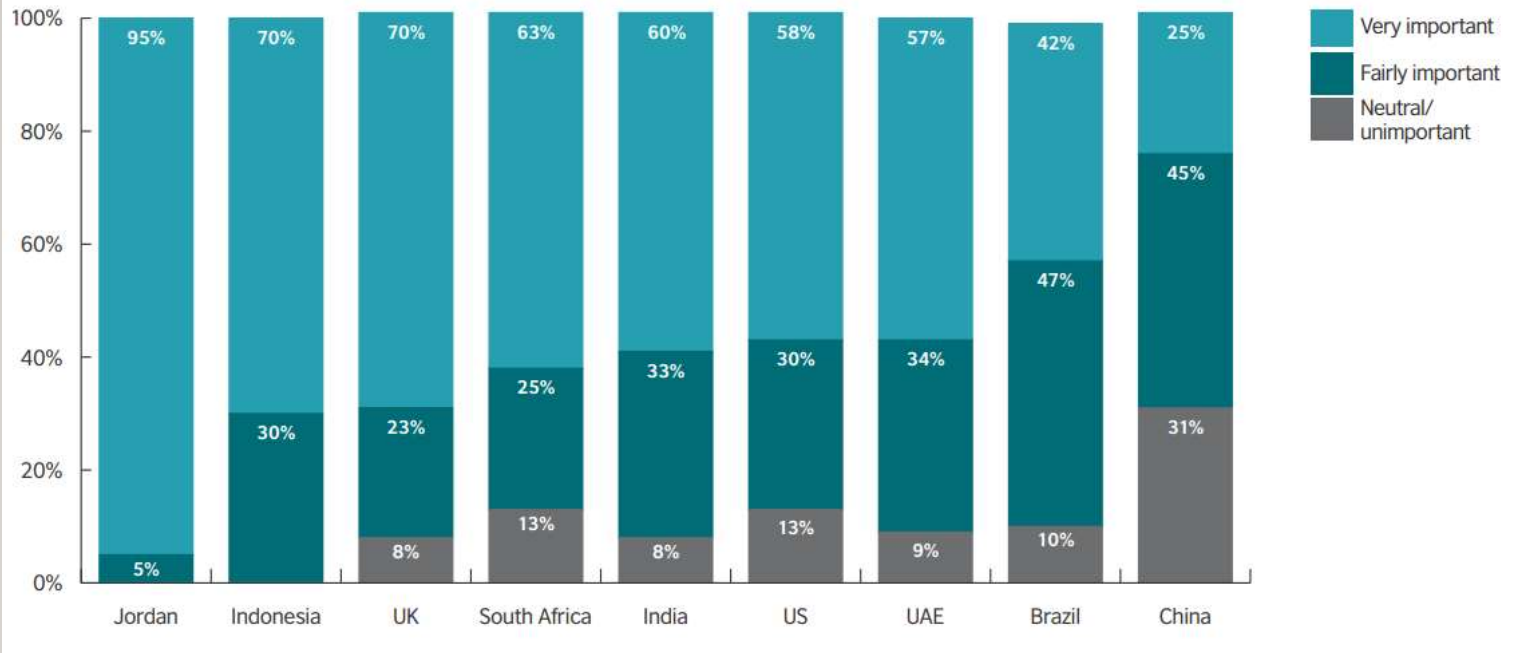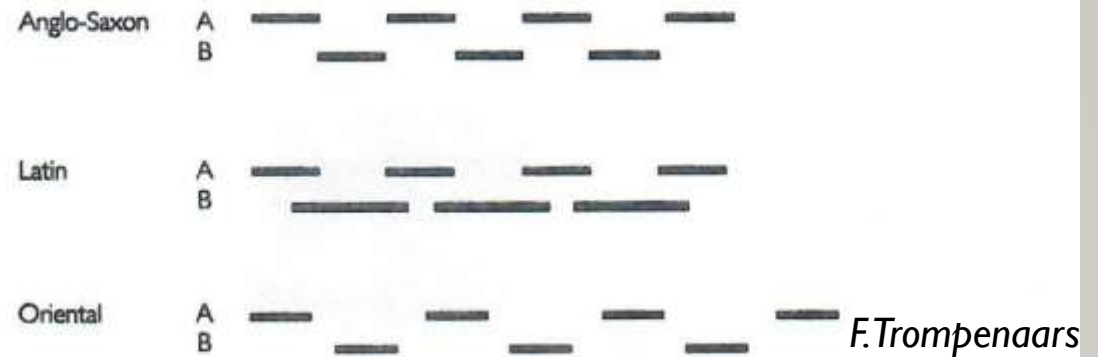
- Interpersonal skills
- Linguistic ability
- Motivation to live abroad
- Cultural curiosity
- Tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity

- Flexibility
- Patience and respect
- Cultural empathy
- Strong sense of self (ego strength)
- Sense of humour

**5

Interculture
&
language
training**

Figure 6.2 **Styles of verbal communication**

Anglo-Saxon A B

Latin A B

Oriental A B

F.Trompenaars

- Greetings
- Courtesy rules
- Small talk - topics
- Making friends
- Taboos – words and topics
- Agreeing/disagreeing

- Turn-taking
- Formal/informal register
- Office talk
- Meetings language
- Socialising after work

INTERCULTURAL LANGUAGE - ACTIVITIES

Subkowiak posited a broad set of intercultural exercise types for the language classroom, such as:

- Exploring foreign cultures

- Doing ethnographic projects

- Comparing and contrasting cultures

- Investigating critical incidents

- Exploring learners culture

- Reflecting on values, attitudes, beliefs

(Subkowiak, 2018)

Get learners to share experiences of C2 and what they see as contrasts with their C1

Compare C1/C2 daily lifestyles, behaviours - YouTube clips/movies

Explore stereotypes in texts/roleplays, & discuss

Write a guide for people coming to C1: what they need to know, people, places, food, customs

INTERCULTURAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE TEACHERS

- We are making people multilingual by teaching English

- We should teach more about language concepts, the nature of language itself as a particular language

- We are making learners aware of cultural difference as well as language difference

- We should make learners more interculturally aware & multilingually competent, by:
    - Teaching language with links to its **cultural context**
    - Teaching language with explicit **cultural reference** work in texts
    - Teaching 21st century communication competences along with language content
    - Developing **cultural literacy** in C1, to better understand C2
    - Teaching explicit **intercultural awareness**

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT - INPUT

- What do language teachers need to know?
  - Definitions: What do we mean by culture, interculture, cross-culture, multiculture?
  - Theoretical models & frameworks, key authors & books
  - Analysis of intercultural skills to be learned and taught
  - Analysis of local context: what values & attitudes are inherent in C1 context

- How to teach intercultural skills
  - Access to stories & case studies
  - Activities for teachers to do themselves, for self-reflection
  - Activities for teachers to give learners, classroom use
  - Methods: eg critical incident technique
    - the cause, description and outcome of a critical incident;
    - users' feelings and perceptions of the situation;
    - actions taken during the incident;
    - changes (if any) in their future behavior.

- Certification: internal or external eg ICC-BCTC course/Barry Tomalin

Aims

1-Give teachers an understanding of intercultural research & frameworks of competences

2-Develop their own intercultural competences and apply to the language classroom

3-Suggest pedagogical approaches to incorporating intercultural content

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TEACHER DEVELOPMENT - ACTIVITIES

- Read & discuss extracts of theoretical models: create own framework of categories appropriate for own teaching context

- Create country / culture profiles of local/students' home culture - quiz

- Draft C1 to C2 questions – Rubovia activity

- Use mini-stories & critical incident methodology to discuss/resolve misunderstandings/cultural conflicts

- Use YouTube and texts illustrating cultural clashes/interface

SAMPLE ACTIVITY - FLIGHT TO RUBOVIA

You are on your first business trip to Rubovia. You board the flight and the cabin crew and passengers are all speaking Rubovian. You don't understand a word. A Rubovian sits next to you and greets you in excellent English. Over the next few hours you have a wonderful opportunity to find out about Rubovia and its culture. What questions will you ask the friendly passenger at your side?

Task:
•Write down four questions about general culture in Rubovia, and four about business culture.
•When you have finished, read out your questions and listen to other people's ideas.

General culture	Business culture
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4

(Adapted by Monika Hrebackova from an exercise in 'The Cross-Cultural Business Pocketbook' by John Mattock)

SAMPLE TD COURSE PLAN - CORPORATE

1   Key thinkers, theory & principles of cross-cultural education

2   Researching & developing cross-cultural training materials

3   How to deliver training in vocational & management settings

4   How to plan an intercultural course for corporates

5   How to build regional/country briefings on key cultural issues

6   Training for relocation – culture shock & adaptation

7   Training multicultural & virtual/distributed teams

Barry Tomalin, BCTC course

THE ANGLO-DUTCH TRANSLATION GUIDE

What the British say	What the British mean	What the Dutch understand
I hear what you say	I disagree completely	He accepts my point of view
You must come by for dinner sometime	Just being polite; Goodbye!	He will invite me for dinner in the course of time
Very interesting	I don't agree	He likes my idea
With the greatest respect	You must be a fool, I have a better suggestion (polite disagreement)	He respects me/my view
I'm sure it's my fault	It's your fault!	It is his fault

I would suggest	Do it as I want you to	An open suggestion
By the way	The primary purpose is	Not very important
Perhaps you could give this some more thought	Don't do it, it's a bad idea	Consider possible road blocks
I am a bit disappointed that	I am very upset and angry that	It doesn't really matter

DISCUSSION

- Should teachers incorporate intercultural content into their language lessons?

- What aspects of the theory & frameworks are relevant to the teaching of English?

- How should we select intercultural content for our learners?

- How should this content be integrated with language learning?

- What topics do you feel are appropriate/inappropriate for the language classroom?

- Does an intercultural approach bring people together or make them more aware of difference?

- How should we help teachers develop their intercultural competences?

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THANK YOU!

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