Parents 4 all

Parents for All

KA2 Strategic Partnership for Innovation in Adult Education

Training material for the development of intercultural skills by parents

Unit 1: Basic intercultural skills

For migrant and refugee parents in Lithuania

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Contents

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Parents4All training material!

As a parent, you want your children to succeed and make the most of their lives. This is what all parents want, independently of their origin. However, you may have sometimes wondered what the best way to deal with the increasing cultural diversity within European societies is. Will your children suffer damage from being exposed to values, cultures and practices different from that of your family? Is diversity good for your children or could it pose a threat to them? Many parents are concerned about these issues.

In the Parents4All partnership we believe that the only way to help *your* children prosper and succeed is to help *all* children in your environment do so. This training material explains how this is possible – how you can collaborate with other parents and with school staff to achieve intercultural understanding in school, combat racism and prejudice, and reap the rewards for you and your children. This training material is designed to make you more aware, to empower you, to inspire you, to provide you with the tools you need.

The material is structured in 2 units. Unit 1, *Basic Intercultural Skills*, helps parents to become more self-aware in cultural issues, develop more tolerance and acquire basic intercultural communication skills. Unit 2, *Empowering MR/ECM Parents for Social Inclusion*, provides parents with practical information that will help them to cultivate positive

attitudes towards integration and obtain a better understanding on how to support the integration process of their children.

More specifically, this document presents Unit 1. Chapter 1, *Self-perception and perception of the other,* explains key concepts related to the personal identity. Parents will understand the impact of culture and social context on self-perception and perception of the other and they will learn how to recognize and challenge their own stereotypes. Simple self-awareness raising techniques are introduced to help parents reflect on their own values, attitudes and behaviours.

In Chapter 2, *Core values of the host society,* you will learn about important historical facts of your host country that shape its national identity. You will also learn about values related to education, success, courtesy, communication and many others. All this will enable you to prevent conflicts and misunderstandings by taking into account the core values of the host society.

Chapter 3, *Intercultural communication principles,* introduces parents to the interaction between culture, language and communication. In this chapter, parents learn about different communication patterns across cultures and basic rules for effective intercultural communication.

Each chapter of the training material begins with the *main points* to be presented and explains the *importance* of the content to follow. Training content is delivered through *a variety of training activities*, which help the learners to get motivated, obtain knowledge and understanding, reflect more profoundly on certain issues, apply newly gained insights in everyday life and interact with their diverse environment. We strongly encourage you to do your best to do the exercises that require interaction with real people and not simply in your mind. This will help you realise the importance and utility of what you are learning. At chapter end *a review* is provided, along with *self-assessment activities* that give you the

opportunity to test what you have learned. The answers to these self-assessment activities are provided at the end of the document.

The Parents4All training material is intended as a *self-study course* and all activities are addressed to the learner. However, taking into account the desire of many parents to discuss such material with other parents, *group activities* are proposed at each chapter's end. These activities are addressed at trainers or facilitators of face-to-face courses.

Embedded in the training material are a series of assessment activities, which form part of the *assessment toolkit* produced by the Parens4All partnership. You will encounter links to assessment activities both before Unit 1 and at the end of Unit 2, upon completion of the course. For you to benefit to the fullest extent, we propose that you do the assessment activities in the order presented and in the way explained in the material.

You will see many times the terms *host society parents* (HSP) and *migrant, refugee or ethnic-cultural minority parents* (MR/ECMP). HSP refers mainly to local parents but it can also refer to parents of migrant origin who have completely integrated into the host society due to living many years there or are second or third generation migrants. MR/ECMP refers to a broad spectrum of parents of diverse origin who are not well acquainted with the cultural norms, the language and the everyday practices of the host societies. The terms migrant-refugee parents (MRP), ECM parents or MR/ECMP are used interchangeably within the training material, reflecting the different social contexts in the Parents4All partnership countries.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy this training and you find it useful for thriving in diversity, better supporting your children and strengthening social cohesion!

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS

You can distinguish between the different activities in this document looking at the icons next to them:

Theory – information

Think about it

Additional external sources of information

Related video/s

Reflection exercises

Apply what you have learned

Group activities

Self-assessment exercises

LINK TO PRE-ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Before starting with the training material, please take a few minutes to do the Pre-Assessment activities.

CHAPTER 1: SELF-PERCEPTION AND PERCEPTION OF THE OTHER

What will I learn?

Key aspects of personal identity

How stereotypes work and how to recognize them in relation to social perceptions

The importance of culture in self-perception and social perception

Why is it important?

In order to get along well with others, it is important to know who we are. Who or what we are depends on our own concepts, ideas, values and beliefs, but also on our social and cultural context, the relationships we have. This self-awareness is essential to understand each other and to be able to live together in harmony.

In this topic you will gain some insight about the complex and diverse factors that shape human behaviour. This will help you to better understand not only yourself, but also the processes of integration your sons and daughters are going through. You will be in a better position to support them in a constructive way.

Personal identity and self-perception

"Who are you?" Although it seems a simple question, it is one of the trickiest you could ever be asked! What others tell you or think about you may be very different from how you would describe yourself. Although it seems strange, being aware of who you are is a difficult thing. However, it is important: the way you identify yourself (personal identity) is related to the way you perceive yourself (self-perception or self-concept), the way you present yourself to others, your behaviour and so on. Once you become aware of how complex it is to analyse yourself it will be easier for you to accept that other people may not be always what they seem to be at a first glance and that it takes time to really get to know them. You will also realise how many different factors affect the development of your children.

We all are who we are as a result of the combined influence of three things: a) our social context (which includes any outward influence such as culture, family, education etc.), b) our unique personal traits (mostly inherited), and c) our personal decisions/attitudes towards ourselves, life and other people. We cannot do many things to change our inherited characteristics. However, we can do a lot to understand the impact of our social context and to become more conscious or aware of how we process all what is taking place in and around us.

Before going on to read, ask yourself:

1) What is one of your characteristics that you owe to your social context?

2) What is one of your characteristics that you owe to your genes?

3) What is one of your characteristics that you owe to your personal decisions/attitudes?

Now think of your parents or some close friends: Can you identify some of their characteristics that are clearly a result of one of these factors?

The power of social context

Would you like to travel in time? Just imagine you could travel to any period and place of the human history – ancient Egypt, the Aztec empire, the Chinese empire of the 5th century BCE or whatever you like. Let's suppose you could understand the language of the people. Still, would you easily feel part of these societies or would you rather feel as an alien? Most probably the second. Practices and behaviours considered normal by these societies might be appalling to your and things taken for granted by you might be unthinkable or stupid for them.

This simple example illustrates that the historical epoch, the society and culture we live in influence greatly who we are: our values, patterns of thought, attitudes and behaviours. In fact, culture is all around us, shaping our brain and behaviour. Consequently, people from various cultures will process the world differently. While some cultural aspects are very obvious (such as technology or resources) other aspects influence us in a more subtle and perhaps unconscious way. This is often referred to as the cultural iceberg.

Cultural Iceberg

Formal (Overt) Aspects

The way we say we get things done

Goals
Technology
Structure
Policies and procedures
Services/Products
Financial resources

The way we really get things done

Beliefs and Assumptions, Perceptions Attitudes Feelings (anger, fear, liking, despair, etc.) } about the formal and informal systems

Informal (Covert) Aspects

Values
Informal interactions
Group norms

Created by Stanley N. Herman. TRW Systems Group, 1970

Now reflect for a while on the culture in which you have grown up:

- *How are politics viewed? How important is the role they play in everyday life?*

- *How is religion viewed? Is there any prevalent religion? Is there real religious freedom?*

- *How does this culture view and treat the elderly people?*

- *What role is attributed to parents? What does the ideal parent look like?*

- *What is the role of women?*

- *Is there any consciousness of environmental issues? How strong?*

Now compare your answers with your own attitudes, values and behaviours in these issues. How strong is the influence?

Components of self-concept

Now let's discuss about our personal attitudes towards ourselves. We are going to speak about self-concept (or self-perception), i.e. the representation we have of ourselves or the attitudes we hold towards ourselves (McLeod, 2008). Self-concept is affected by multiple dimensions, most of which are related to the social context discussed before. Moral /spiritual, emotional and biological dimensions also play a role. It can be said that self-concept is learned rather than inherent.
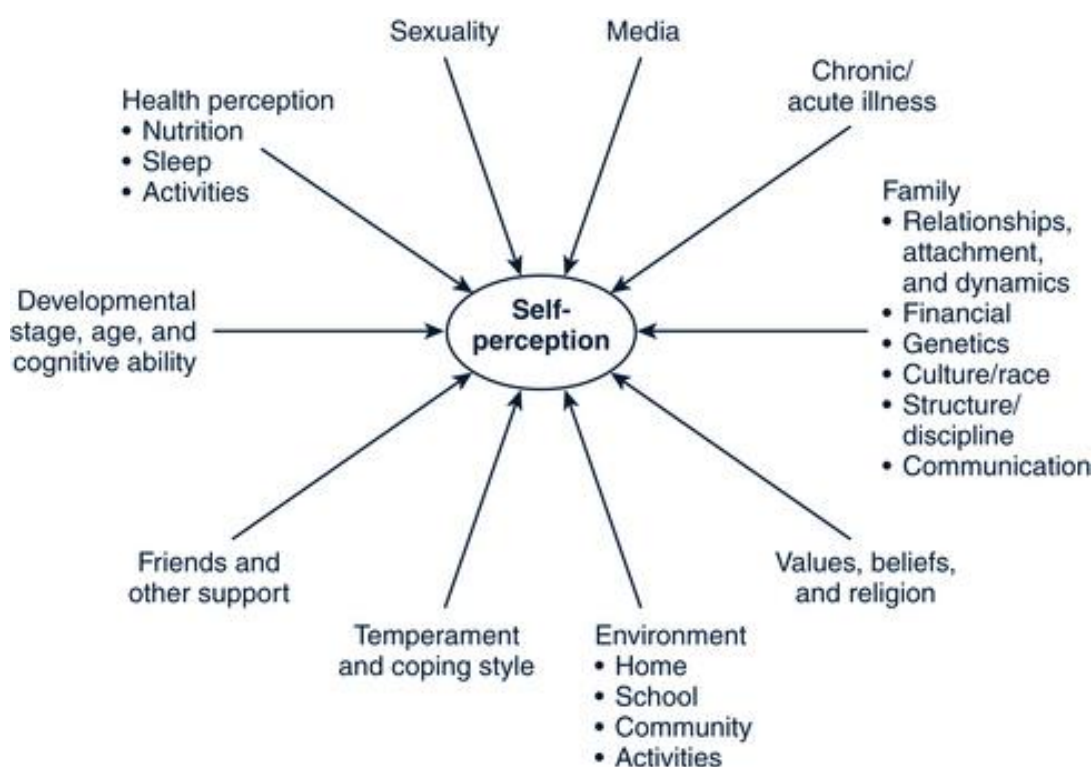
The two main components of self-concept are self-image (how we see ourselves) and self-esteem (the extent to which we value ourselves).

Self-image does not necessarily relate to reality. Have a look at the following pictures of unrealistic self-image:
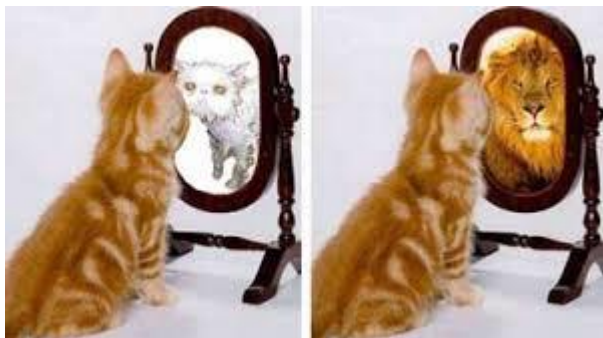
Now think about the following:

– *How will distorted self-image most probably affect behaviour in these cases?*

– *How can beauty ideals affect the way we see our own body?*

– *How is the self-image in these cases opposed to what other people see? How might this affect relationships with others?*

There are two other important social elements which may greatly affect self-concept:

– The opinion that others form about us (e.g. how will you view your body when others make positive or negative comments about it?)

– The comparison we make with the others based either on our common points/ aspects or differences.

And these elements lead to the second component of self-concept, which is self-esteem.

"It is good to see ourselves as others see us. Try as we may, we are never able to know ourselves fully as we are, especially the evil side of us. This we can do only if we are not angry with our critics but will take in good heart whatever they might have to say." Mahatma Gandhi

Self-esteem

Self-esteem or self-value refers to the emotional dimension of your self-concept. It represents how much value you place on yourself, how much you believe in yourself and your capabilities, and that you deserve happiness in your life (Branden, 1995). Self-esteem is influenced by four main factors (Argyles, 2008):

a) The reaction of others to us

b) Comparison with others

c) Social roles

d) Identification (with social roles, standards, comments of others etc.)

In essence, we compare ourselves against an ideal standard, and depending on the image we have of ourselves, how close we are to that standard, we may feel positively or negatively about ourselves. Once again, this does not necessary relate to reality. Two people with similar circumstances and characteristics may differ a lot in how they evaluate and feel about themselves. They may be equally intelligent, have the same income and profession, look equally good etc. but one feels a zero while the other feels a success or is very content with him/herself.

People with low self-esteem tend to feel more helpless, not be content with their performance (no matter how good it is), not adapt well to stressful events and generally behave in more problematic ways. People with high self-esteem have usually the opposite experiences, but excessive self-esteem isn't that positive either, as it can lead to arrogance or violence.

However, caution! The way one feels about oneself does not always show right away. Some people may consciously try to affect how others see them (self-presentation). They try to influence other people's impressions to win their approval. Thus, they mask their real self-concept in order to succeed or deal with conflicting expectations in their environment.

Learn more about self-concept and self-esteem by doing the following exercises!

Me, myself, I — self-concept and self-esteem

Learn more about self-awareness in this video:

Self-Awareness Exercises

Reflection on personal identity and social belonging

1) Please describe the different parent groups or types in your children's school. Which one do you think you belong to, and with which do you identify? What does the group mean to you?

2) Now think of a parent group or social category you belong to, but with which you do not identify. Why do you not identify with it?

3) Try to spot the factors that influence the level of your identification with a group (e.g. attitudes, beliefs, marital status, financial status, profession etc.) Which factors are the most and which the least relevant?

The identity circle

This activity helps you to identify what you consider to be the most important dimensions of your identity.

First, write your name in the central circle. Then you should fill in each satellite circle with a dimension of your identity you consider to be among the most important in defining yourself (e.g. female, athlete, Jewish, brother, educator, Asian, middle class, etc.).
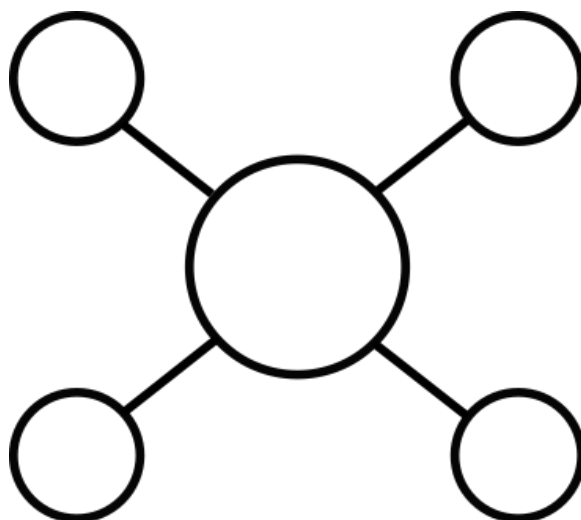
Then ask yourself these questions:

- How do the dimensions of your identity that you chose as important differ from the dimensions other people use to make judgments or have opinions about you?

- When I look in the mirror each morning I see…

- Who are my people? What do they see in the mirror?

- If I had to describe myself in four words I would say that I am: (4 words)

- One experience that I have had that helped me to form this description of myself was…

- One thing about being a (answers to question above) that makes me feel good or proud is…

- Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

  I am (a/an) _____ but I am NOT (a/an) _____.

My personal identity tree

Let's draw our own identity tree! For this we first draw the tree as we want, then write or draw in each of the parts the following:

• roots = your life influences and beliefs

• trunk = life structure and particularly aspects that are quite firm and fixed

• branches = relationships and connections, directions, interests, how you spend time

• leaves = information and knowledge - and sources

• buds = your ideas and hopes for the future, and your potential

• fruit = achievements

• flowers = what makes you special, strengths

• thorns = challenges, threats and difficulties

Where is culture?
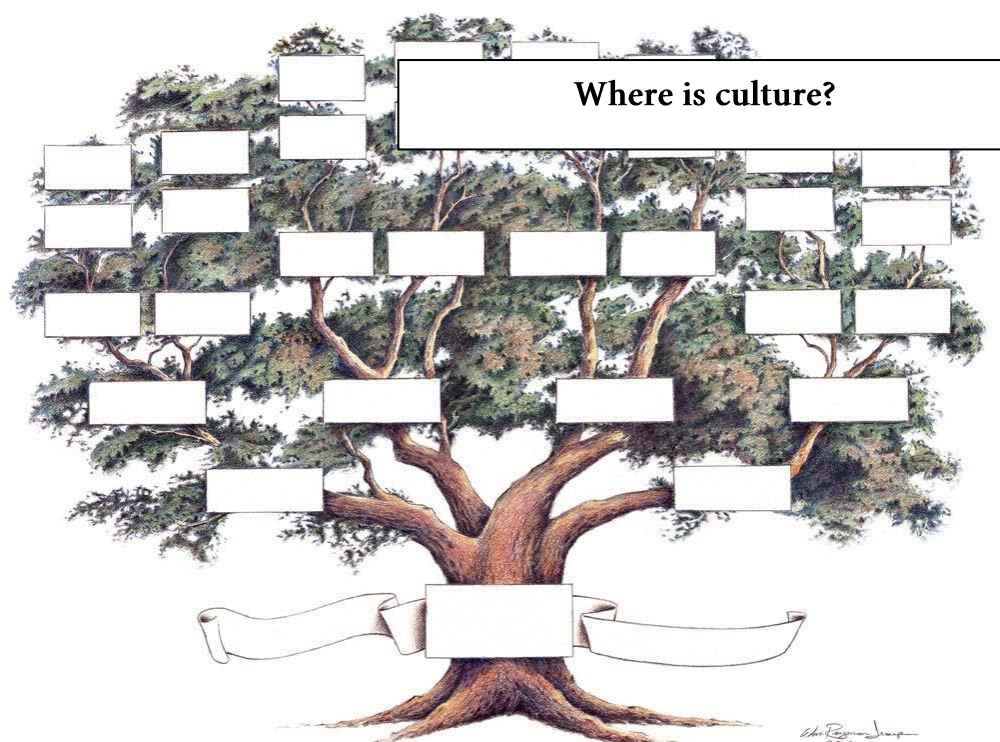
Social perception

Social perception is the process we use in order to create impressions about others or/and to make judgments about individuals or groups. In simple words, social perception is about how we perceive other people and how we interpret their behaviour.

Although the concept of social perception applies more to the initial impressions made about people, it does often culminate into firm opinions formed gradually about other people. There are three main aspects that help us form impressions about other people:

- Our **own self** (familiarity with the person, attitudes, mood, self-concept)

- The **situation** surrounding the person (context of the interaction, situational circumstances)

- Observed **behaviour** of the person and other attributes (physical appearance, verbal communication, body language, assumed intentions)

The so called "first impression error" refers to the tendency to form lasting opinions about an individual based on initial impressions.

DILBERT SCOTT ADAMS — Minneapolis StarTribune, Nov. 3, 2008

> Think of the following situation:
>
> *You meet for the first time your daughter's teacher. You were stuck in morning traffic and arrived very stressed. The teacher is 15 minutes late and mumbles an apology. You have to go to work after the meeting and your time is limited. The teacher is a tall young man and his clothing discloses a liberal lifestyle.*
>
> – *How may your mood and limited time affect your impression?*
>
> – *How may the physical appearance of the teacher affect your impression depending on your own lifestyle?*
>
> – *How does the fact that this is the first meeting with the teacher affect your expectations?*

Besides forming impressions, we also **attribute** to peoples certain motives or intentions, according to their behaviour. That is, we interpret their behaviour, making assumptions about their personalities. For example, we may think somebody is a kind person because he/she is smiling. Children may think a teacher is a bad person because he/she insists on discipline (PsycholoGenie.com, nd). Interestingly, it has been observed that people usually think about others that it is their personality that makes them behave the way they behave (he was rude with me because he is racist), while when it comes to themselves they usually attribute their behaviour to situational causes (I was rude because I was so tired and stressed) (eNotes, 2016).

Our social perception can also be influenced or even distorted by how well we know another person, our culture, stereotypes, prejudice etc. Learn more about stereotypes and prejudice in the next section.

- *Can you think of a time when your own ideas influenced your perception about another person?*

*Find out about a very interesting distortion of **social perception, the halo effect**.*

*To find out more about the impact of culture on our social perception, watch this video about **ethnocentrism and cultural relativism**.*

*Check out these **activities** for exploring your cultural awareness.*

Stereotypes and prejudice

A **stereotype** is a generalised, oversimplified belief about groups of people, cultures, places and so on. It is an assumption that we make automatically when we hear about someone or something; we classify these persons or things in specific categories. These generalised classifications may be positive, negative or even neutral. Consider these examples: "Irish people have red hair and freckles", "black people are good at sports", "old people are wise", "China is dirty and polluted", "Muslims are fanatic".

Stereotypes exist all over the world and start in our mind automatically. We cannot get completely rid of them because they derive from the human need to understand the world. Making categories and classifications of people and things we can process information quicker and we avoid the time-consuming, strenuous analysis of numerous and diverse factors. It can be said that stereotypes are more or less as a "shortcut" in the cognitive process. However, due to their nature, stereotypes give an incomplete and largely erroneous picture of reality.

Prejudice refers to emotionally laden attitudes that have been formed "toward a particular social group of people before having enough information on which to form a knowledgeable opinion" (Encyclopedia.com). When prejudice is negative it produces hostility, when it is positive it produces unduly favourable feelings.

Our stereotypes and prejudices are problematic because they may lead to the development of discrimination—unjustified negative reactions toward people belonging to a certain group, simply based on their group membership. For example, when a person reacts negatively when he sees a woman parking badly, or when a person grabs his bag with force so that they do not steal it when a person of colour enters the subway. Obviously,

both beliefs are erroneous, stereotyped, and negative prejudices (Stangor, 2011).

Many social psychologists differentiate 3 levels of stereotypes:

- Public – what we say to others about a group

- Private – what we consciously believe but don't say to others

- Implicit – set of learned mental associations that can guide our judgments and actions without being aware of it

Reflection exercises on stereotypes

Compare the two lists with gender stereotypes and answer the following questions:

a. Which of these stereotypes exist in your culture of origin?

b. Which are prevalent in the country you live in?

c. Which do you personally adopt?

d. Can you think of examples proving these stereotypes wrong?

e. How can these stereotypes (or their absence) influence school activities and teachers' behaviour?

Males	Females
All men enjoy working on cars	Women are nurses, not doctors
Men do not do housework and they are not responsible for taking care of children	Women are responsible for raising children
Men play video games	Women are supposed to cook and do housework
Men enjoy outdoor activities such as camping, fishing, and hiking	Women are supposed to have "clean jobs" such as secretaries, teachers, and librarians
Men are good at math	Women are supposed to look pretty and be looked at
It is always men who work in science, engineering, and other technical fields	Women do not have technical skills and are not good at "hands on" projects such as car repairs
Men are in charge; they are always at the top	Women are meant to be the damsel in distress; never the hero
As husbands, men tell their wives what to do	Women are supposed to be submissive and do as they are told

From [List of Gender Stereotypes](#).

Read the news extracts below and highlight how stereotypes and prejudice lead to discrimination.

a. Sky Sports presenters Andy Gray and Richard Keys have been accused of sexism after making several comments about a female referee, called Sian Massey. They commented on her understanding of the offside rule during a Premier League match. The commentators believed their microphones were switched off but were actually recorded making remarks such as: 'Somebody better get down there and explain offside to her.'

'Can you believe that? A female linesman. Women don't know the offside rule.'

b. James Parke, 22, was on a night out which ended in him fighting for his life. James, who is a trainee police officer, was having fun with friends (they are homosexual) when up to 20 boys, some as young as 14, started shouting homophobic abuse at them. James was repeatedly punched and kicked in his face and body by the boys and he was left with several skull and facial fractures.

Ways to eliminate stereotypes and prejudices

Stereotypes and prejudice are not easy to change. However, if we become conscious of our own stereotypes and try to adopt a more realistic view of the people around us, this will help us greatly to have better relationships and enjoy, rather than resent, diversity around us. Consider for a moment the consequences of cultural stereotyping in our relationship with school:

- It influences our perception of others: More positive perceptions of similar groups, such as parents of the same nationality.

- It affects our behaviour: Not interacting with other parents from different religions, nationalities etc.; not cooperating with teachers; passing on to our children defensive or hostile behaviour towards peers.

- It affects the behaviour of the stereotyped groups: Feeling inferior, passing on to children who are less well prepared, feelings of resentment etc.

Here are some tips that can help to eliminate stereotypes and prejudice:

- Developing empathy: putting oneself in the other's shoes, asking oneself questions like: Why will others act that way? How will they feel being discriminated?

- Imagining the victim in a different role: e.g. the increased participation of black actors in comedy series has favoured their inclusion; television series that show female characters of great strength combat gender stereotypes etc.

- Increased communication with other parents, teachers, the education community and between groups reduces prejudice/discrimination

- Promote friendship with people from other groups, for example with parents from different cultures.

- Education based on acceptance and tolerance. From infancy, values and attitudes that exalt human dignity must be taught.

All That We Share. A thought-provoking video!

First Impressions

Combatting stereotypes:

How to talk to your children

Talking to kids about racial stereotypes

Identifying stereotypes

Think about a situation when someone made a biased judgment about you or acted unfairly toward you because of your age, skin colour, clothes you were wearing, gender, the way you speak, where you live, how much money your family has, or some other reason.

Now, reflect on these questions:

– How did you feel?

– Why?

– How did you deal with it?

Review of Chapter 1

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                                                        ┌──────────────┐
                                          ┌──────────┐  │  VALUES      │
                                          │Self-concept│ │  /BELIEFS    │
                         ┌─────────────────┤          │  └──────────────┘
                         │Self-perception and│────────┤  Self-esteem │
                         │self-awareness     │         └──────────────┘
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│Perception of the│                         │          │  Self-image  │
│self and the other│──── Social perception  │          └──────────────┘
└──────────────┘         ┌──────────────────┐
                         │Stereotypes and    │
                         │prejudices         │
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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT                           │
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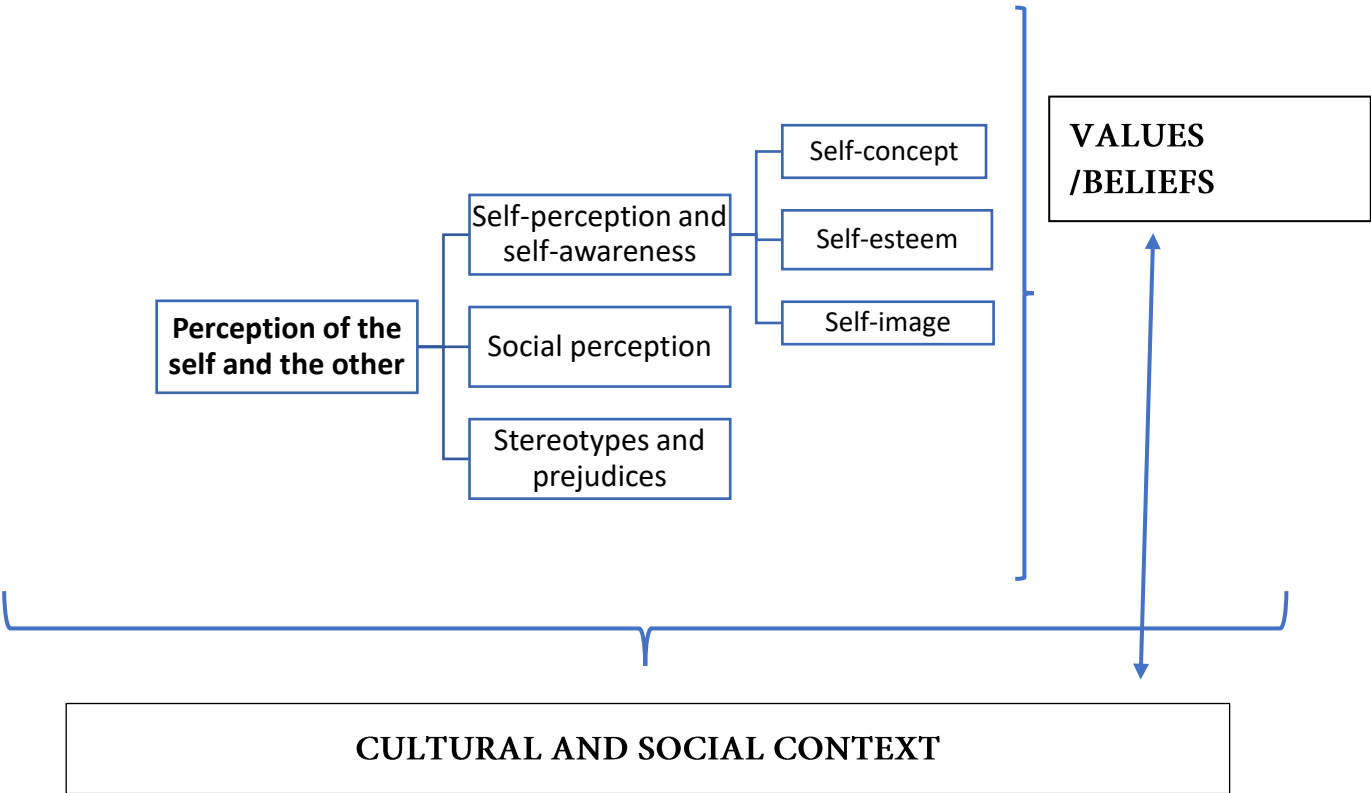
Suggested group activities

Activity 1: The Lines

Guidelines are:

1. No pressure to respond.

2. Each of the categories will have some "grey areas".

3. No talking, no interruptions, no questions.

4. It is important that you be as honest as you can, yet do not risk more than you feel comfortable sharing. You decide what to share and expose.

5. If you cross the line notice who is with you, notice who is across from you, note your feelings and please cross back.

Examples:

Cross the line if…

- You are female

- You are male

- You are left-handed

- You are from a large city or town

- You took a family vacation this summer

- You are an athlete

- You were born outside _____

- Your parents are divorced or separated

- You are African------

- You feel you know very little about your cultural heritage

- You practice a religion

- You have felt embarrassed about the economic class your family is in

- You feel lonely

- You think the drinking age should be lowered to 18

- You or someone you know is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender

- You consider yourself a feminist

- You are uncomfortable with the way you look

Discussion:

- How are you feeling right now?

- Is there anything you want to say about why you crossed the line in a particular question?

- How did you feel when you got to cross the line vs. when you had no say in an answer?

- Were there any questions difficult to choose an answer for?

- How did you feel when there were lots of people on your side of the line? How did you feel when there were few people on your side of the line?

- What do you think the purpose of this activity was?

Activity 2: Discussion groups about stereotypes

Each person has an index card placed on their back with a description of different types of people (related to profession, religion, disability etc.) Participants don't know what they have been labelled with. Each person has to guess what their label is by the way others act towards them. After discuss about:

1. What are stereotypes and how do they affect people's lives?

2. Can you think of any events in your life that were influenced by stereotypes?

3. How can the media (newspapers, television, movies) help to reduce stereotyping?

4. Do you think certain groups are more subject to stereotyping than others? If so, why?

5. What do you think an individual can do to help reduce bias and stereotyping?

This activity was adapted from ultimatecampresource.com.

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What did I learn?

Assessment 1: Key concepts related to personal identity and self-perception

Choose the correct answer for the following statements. Only one option is correct.

1. **It is important to analyse your self-identity and self-perception because:**
    a) It will help you to adjust better to the host society
    b) It will help you realize that it is not possible to understand other people
    c) It will help you realize the various **factors** that shape the development of your children
    d) It will make you a better person

2. **Self-perception or self-concept:**
    a) Is inherent
    b) Refers to the attitudes we have towards ourselves
    c) Includes self-esteem and self-presentation
    d) None of the above

3. **Our personal identity and self-perception are shaped by:**
    a) Our personal decisions and attitudes
    b) Our unique personal traits
    c) Our social context
    d) All the above

4. **A good way to increase your self-awareness is:**
    a) To reflect on your family history and personal experiences
    b) To do some research to understand better your home culture
    c) To identify your values and try to understand how you adopted them

d) All the above

Assessment 2: Impact of culture and social context on self-perception

Below you will find five statements. Your task is to decide whether these statements are true or false. If a statement is false, think about why this is the case.

1. **If you understand a language you will also understand the society of the people who speak that language.**

    True or False?

2. **Culture is part of the social context.**

    True or False?

3. **People from various cultures process the world differently.**

    True or False?

4. **Values and group norms are on the tip of the cultural iceberg.**

    True or False?

5. **The opinion that others form about us can greatly affect our self-perception.**

    True or False?

Assessment 3: Reflection on your values and beliefs

On a scale from 1 to 5 (with 1 being 'completely disagree' and 5 'completely agree'), how do you feel about the following statements? Please circle the number that most closely reflects your feelings.

1. **If I had been born on another continent some hundreds of years ago, I would have very different religious beliefs.**

    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. **My attitude towards technology is mainly shaped by my personality. My social context does not influence me in this aspect.**

   <div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

3. **Knowing a culture of a person you can tell a lot about his/her personality and values.**

   <div align="center">1   2   3   4   5</div>

Assessment 4: Impact of culture and social context on social perception

Choose the correct answer for the following statements. Only one option is correct.

1. **Social perception is about:**

   a) Interpreting the behaviour of others

   b) Forming impressions about others and interpreting their behaviour

   c) Our first impressions from others

   d) Our attitude towards other people

2. **We often attribute to other people motives and intentions based on:**

   a) Our mood

   b) Their behaviour

   c) Our culture

   d) All the above

3. **We tend to explain our own behaviour and the behaviour of others:**

   a) In the same way

   b) We are subjective with other people but objective with ourselves

c) We link others' behaviour to their personalities but our own to circumstances

d) We link others' behaviour to circumstances but our own to our personality

Assessment 5: Stereotypes and their impact

Indicate which response(s) from the list on the right correspond(s) with, or match(es), each statement in the list on the left. There may be more than one match for each statement.

1. Match the correct definition(s):

| a. Stereotype |
| b. Prejudice |
| c. Discrimination |

1. Emotionally laden attitudes that have been formed toward a particular social group of people before having enough information on which to form a knowledgeable opinion

2. A positive or negative assumption that we make automatically when we hear about someone or something

3. An unreasonable dislike of a particular group of people or things, or a preference for one group of people or things over another

4. A generalised, oversimplified belief about groups of people, cultures etc.

5. Unfair treatment of people belonging to a certain group, simply based on their group membership

2. Levels of stereotypes:

a. Public	
b. Private	
c. Implicit	

1. What we consciously believe but don't say to others

2. What we unconsciously believe and may guide our judgements

3. What many people commonly believe

4. What we say to others about a group

5. What we consciously believe and support in front of others

3. Impact of cultural stereotyping at school:

a.	Social perception
b.	Behaviour
c.	Reactions of the other group

1. Frustration and resentment

2. More positive interpretation of the behaviour of parents of the same origin

3. No interaction with parents from different backgrounds

4. Lower achievement

5. Limited collaboration with teachers

6. Suspecting racism or intolerance as the reason for other parents' behaviour

Assessment 6: Recognizing and challenging your stereotypes

Below you will find two questions followed by statements. Your task is to decide whether these statements are the correct answer to the question or not.

1. **Is it a stereotype?**

    Yes / No

    a) The Germans are very well organized

    b) Women are not good drivers

    c) I don't like people with a different colour than mine

    d) Cities in the Middle East are noisy

    e) The Chinese are very hard-working

    f) I love the Japanese culture

    g) I don't like politics

2. **Would the following actions help to eliminate stereotypes and prejudices?**

    Yes / No

    a) Trying to put oneself in the other's shoes

    b) Joining clubs or communities of people of the same origin with oneself

    c) Imagining people of different backgrounds in different roles

    d) Talking to people from different backgrounds

    e) Reflecting on human dignity

    f) Doing research to understand one's own culture better

For the correct answers, click <u>here</u>.

CHAPTER 2: CORE VALUES OF THE LITHUANIAN SOCIETY

What will I learn?

In this section you are going to learn about the Lithuanian society – the main facts and events that have shaped it, core values, religious customs, taboos, courtesy rules.

You are also going to learn about the Lithuanian education system and how to succeed in it, and

The Lithuanian perception of family life – values, customs, daily life.

Why is it important?

Even when travelling and visiting a foreign country for a short time, it is a good idea to research about the destination in order to avoid misunderstandings and be well prepared for any possible situations. This is even more true when moving to a new country, especially relocating with the whole family.

We commend you, as a parent representing ethnic and cultural minority, for taking interest and educating yourself about your new host country, Lithuania. We believe that the only way for people representing multiple cultures to live and prosper together is through integration. And in order to successfully integrate into society is by having an open mind, learning about it, and practicing tolerance and understanding.

Milestones in the history of the host society shaping its national identity

Main facts about Lithuania

Population: ~3 000 000

Area: 65 300 sq. m

Population density: 46 inhabitants / sq. m

Altitude: Between -4 m and +294 m

Bordering countries: Russia (Southwest), Poland (South), Belarus (East), Latvia (North), Baltic Sea (West).

Ethnicities: Lithuanians 85,08%, Poles 6,65%, Russians 5,88%, Others 2,39%

Religions: Roman Catholic 85,9%, Russian Orthodox 4,6%, Other Christians 2,3%, religious non-Christians 0,7%, Irreligious 6,8%

Native languages: Lithuanian (official) 85%, Russian 8,2%, Polish 5,8%, Others 1%

Languages spoken: Lithuanian (official) 96%, Russian 70%, English 30%, Polish 14%, German 8%

Historical periods: Grand Duchy of Lithuania until 1569, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth 1562-1795, Russian Empire 1775-1915, Republic of Lithuania 1918-1940, Soviet occupation 1940-1990, Republic of Lithuania 1990-

National holidays: January 1st, February 16th, March 11th, Easter Sunday and Monday, May 1st, June 24th, July 6th, August 15th, November 1st, December 24th, December 25th and 26th.

Lithuanian history

Lithuania, as any other country, has a long history, impossible to summarise in just one page. Nevertheless, below you will find a short bullet list of the most important Lithuanian history milestones.

– The first inhabitants in Lithuania appeared in the final ice age, 10 000 BC. The farmers were replaced by the hunter-gatherers. The forefathers of Lithuanians, the Baltic tribes, are among the oldest European ethnicities who settled in approximately the current area around 2500 BC.

– The majority of these Baltic peoples, who traded amber with Romans and later fought Vikings, was taken up by a tribe called Lithuanians. This process of Lithuanians becoming a majority speeded up under Mindaugas who became a Christian and was crowned as the first and only king in 1253. After his death, people of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania went back to their pagan ways.

– Eventually the Lithuanian people adopted Christianity under Grand Duke Jogaila (1387). Lithuanians created a long-lasting alliance with Poland. Under the rule of Grand Duke Vytautas Lithuania became the largest country in Europe in the 15th century, stretching from Baltic to the Black sea.

Battle of Žalgiris (Grunewald) by Jan Matejko

- There was a new threat from Moscow, so responding to it Lithuania and Poland formed a Commonwealth in 1569. At first it was successful in keeping the enemies away, however, there was a gradual Polonization of the Lithuanian noble class as Lithuanians of the time considered Polish culture to be superior to the Lithuanian one.

- By the 17th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became weak. The country lost several wars that destroyed its great position of power. In 1772-1795 the country was split up into part and annexed by Prussia, Austria, and Russia with the main Lithuanian lands being ruled by Russia.

- During the Russian rule Lithuanian language was banned and Catholic religion was suppressed. In 1831 and 1863 there were two unsuccessful rebellions to restore Poland-Lithuania but finally a goal for Lithuanian independence of both Russia and Poland was established. The restoration of independence became possible after the collapse of Russian Empire and the surrender of Germany in World War I.

- In late 19th century there was a limited industrial revolution and urbanization, but the newly independent Lithuania was still mostly an agricultural society. Lithuanian independence did not last for a long time – it was cut short by the World War II (1940). Lithuania was occupied by the Nazi Germany and by the Soviet Union. The Soviet occupation ended in 1990, having lasted 45 years. During this time of occupation, hundreds of thousands of people were murdered, tortured or exiled to Siberia. This period of history has left deep economical and psychological scars among the Lithuanian people.

- In 1988 a massive Sąjūdis independence movement was established. On 11 March, 1990 Lithuania became the first country to restore its independence of the Soviet Union. This led to the complete collapse of the Soviet Union in late 1991.

– In the 1990s Lithuania's economy started to grow, building modern skyscrapers, department stores, and private homes. Due to many years spent in the Soviet Union, Lithuanian economy was still behind other Western countries. Because of this a lot of Lithuanians emigrated. Emigration rose even more when Lithuania joined the European Union in 2004 – up to 20% of its people left the country, mostly to go work in other European countries.

The Baltic Way, 1989 August 23rd

Video footage and official song of the 1989 August 23rd "The Baltic Way"

A short **introduction to Lithuania**

What is life really like in Lithuania?

– Can you think of a similar event as "The Baltic Way" in your country's history?
– Can you find any similarities in history between Lithuania and your country?

*One of the most important dates for Lithuanians is **August 23, 1989,** when they joined hands in a peaceful protest with Latvians and Estonians. The Baltic Way stretched for 600 km (about 370 miles) and included roughly 2 million people.*

*More on **Lithuanian history***

Below you can find a few organisations that work with migrant integration in Lithuania:

Caritas

"Migrant Training Centers" in Vilnius and Kaunas provide newly arrived third-country nationals free language courses, Lithuanian history, cultural and civic cognitive courses, historical, cultural trips to Lithuania, Lithuanian historical documentary film reviews, trips to Lithuanian museums, exhibitions, theaters in Vilnius and Kaunas.

DC "Cultural Hill" opened in early 2008. The Integrative Day Center hosts educational and educational activities for children, cultural afternoon for women, social, legal and psychological counseling for adults. At the DC you can use computers, the Internet, the library, participate in IT courses, "Handicrafts", and Lithuanian language courses. This center is unique in that activities and courses are held together with local community members. Asylum seekers in Lithuania are welcomed and introduced to a new culture, a country from the very first days. Currently, DC has an average of around 60 asylum seekers. DC is funded by the European Refugee Fund.

Caritas organises social integration of immigrants in Vilnius County. At present, about 20 refugees and their families who already have a status in Lithuania participate in the program. During the integration, social workers help asylum-seekers to find housing that we also finance, find

employment or re-qualify. Immigrant children can attend pre-school and school education institutions in Lithuania. The program is financed by the Refugee Reception Center under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor.

Red Cross Society of Lithuania

In 2004, in order to contribute to the more effective integration of refugees in Lithuania, the Lithuanian Red Cross In Kaunas, opened the Refugee Day Center. The main mission of this center is to help refugees become more integrated into the Lithuanian society, to solve their problems, gradually enabling refugees to become independent members of our society.

From 2016 In the center of the city, every day, not only refugees arriving in Lithuania but also all third-country nationals from Ukraine, Belarus, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Eritrea and other countries are admitted. The Center's social workers provide foreigners with relevant information on employment, education, tax, social security, housing, health services and other topics. Refugees at the centers can get professional legal assistance, if necessary - individual counseling for a psychologist.

Infocentre for migrants has also been operating in Klaipėda in recent years. From 2013 to 2014, 226 immigrants from 22 different countries contacted them. The Center provides social, legal, psychological, vocational guidance counseling, information events (seminars on relevant topics for migrants), Lithuanian language training and public awareness training.

The above-mentioned services are aimed at filling the information gaps of third-country nationals, facilitating the integration process and improving the quality of life in Lithuania. The complex of these services enables third-country nationals to feel more free, to participate more

actively in the life of the host country, to get to know the city life, community, culture, traditions, engage in various activities, find a job, etc. All this has a positive impact on the adaptation and integration of third-country nationals in Lithuania.

Migration Information Center (MIC) I Choose Lithuania

Purpose: to provide consultations to all returning Lithuanian emigrants thinking about return, or anyone who wants to come to Lithuania. Services: One-stop-shop consultations on work, education, health, integration of family members of foreigners and other issues related to return / entry.

Center for Social-Educational Initiatives PLIUS

Objectives: actively contribute to social, moral, spiritual, artistic and cultural education of the society; carry out and promote initiatives to promote the development of a sustainable society in order to ensure the balanced and active participation and welfare of all its members and socially vulnerable groups; to promote the development of cultural diversity and tolerance among different ethnic and other social groups; through initiatives to realize public interests related to life in the neighborhood. Services: Lithuanian language training; Day center for children of foreigners living in Vilnius; intercultural events and celebrations.

Foreigners' registration centres

Key principles of the host society
(main articles of the constitutional charter)

Law of Lithuania

Almost all Lithuanian laws were established after 1990 as the country became independent from the Soviet Union. The legal system was created similar to various laws of Western European countries. The Constitution was adopted by a referendum in 1992.

After Lithuania joined the European Union in 2004, it had to take on European Union regulations. If the EU regulations are in conflict with the Lithuanian laws, usually the EU regulations are applied.

Lithuanian Laws on Important Issues

- **Recreational drugs** are illegal, **alcohol**, smoking, and pork are legal. The legal age for buying alcohol is 20 and for buying cigarettes – 18 years old.
- **Prostitution** and **pornography** are illegal, **homosexual** relations and **divorce** are legal. Age of consent is 14, but if the partner is over 18, then it is 16 years old. Marriage is allowed from 18 years old.
- **Non-automatic guns** are legal to have for self-defence. But they have to be concealed and need a local permit.
- **Gambling** is legal but limited. Legal age for gambling is 21. **Lotteries** are legal.

- **Euthanasia** is illegal. **Abortion** is legal. **Capital punishment** is not practiced. **Torturing** is banned. **Corporal punishment of children** banned.
- **Practicing any religion** and wearing religious clothing is free.
- **Official language** is Lithuanian. Other languages are permitted.
- **Freedom of speech** is respected.
- **Political system is democratic**, but the Communist and National socialist parties are not allowed to be established.
- **Voting is not mandatory**.
- **Private enterprise** is legal. Some forms of business require a license.
- **Labour strikes** are permitted.
- **Discrimination** (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious, social, etc.) is banned.
- **Free education** is available to all Lithuanian citizens until the age of 18.
- **Free healthcare** is available to almost all Lithuanian citizens for the more serious diseases and health checks.
- **Dual citizenship (nationality)** is not permitted.
- **Speed limits** are 50 km/h (in towns), 70 km/h (dirt/gravel roads), 90 km/h (most roads), 110/120 km/h (lower class motorways, winter/summer), 110/130 km/h (upper class motorways, winter/summer). **Car lights** must be on day and night. **Maximum alcohol quotient** is 0,04% for car drivers, 0% for bus, truck, motorcycle drivers and those having a license for under 2 years. **Driver's license** may be acquired at 18 for most cars.

Introduction to the **Lithuanian Legal System**

– Which laws are different and which ones are the same in your country?
– Are traffic rules and speed limits strictly reinforced in your country?

LithuaniaLaw.com *website helps to find answers to the common legal issues faced by foreigners in Lithuania.*

Host society's perception of family life
(values, customs, daily life, recent developments)

Lithuanian Society

There are approximately 3 million people in Lithuanian and there are no significant conflicts within the society. Its culture is influenced by both the Western and the Eastern cultures.

Lithuanians do not like to speak much to people that they don't know. They value family and their home is very important to them, since it is there that they can freely speak their mind.

Lithuanian values, ethics, and morale have been influenced by Christian, Soviet and Western ideas.

Lithuanian Families and Personal Relations

Family s very important to Lithuanians – it is the basis of the nation. A typical family consists of two parents and two children. Unmarried couples also often live together. In the past due to the shortage of housing, several generations used to share the same flat. This has changed now – children move out of their parents' house, but sometimes are still supported by them financially.

In the family husband and wife usually share their finances, giving a small allowance to their children. Sometimes they support other family members, as well. It is considered to be dishonourable to put one's parents into an elderly home.

How Lithuanian people raise their children differs from family to family, but any suggestions of the state are generally not welcomed.

Sex in the Lithuanian society is considered to be an important commitment and being faithful to one's partner is valued. STD rates, teen pregnancies, and abortion rates in Lithuania are lower than in other Baltic states.

In cities people keep cats and dogs as pets and treat them as family members. In villages, however, they are considered to be more like farm animals, dogs protecting the house and cats catching mice.

When not being with family, Lithuanian people choose to spend their time with friends. These are usually relatives, work colleagues, former class mates.

Younger Lithuanians treat older people with respect and use honorific language, whereas the older ones treat younger members of society less formally. Female friends express their friendship with hugs and kisses, but male friends usually limit their contact to handshakes. Boss-employee friendships are not common. It is also very uncommon for Lithuanian people to talk openly to strangers. They usually keep a high level of formality.

In Lithuanian villages everyone knows everyone else – all neighbours know each other. However, in cities the situation is completely different – it is not uncommon for neighbours living in the same apartment building to not even say "hello". On the other hand, since Lithuania became a member of the EU and many people emigrated to Western Europe, people have kept in touch with their friends and relatives abroad. Those who left Lithuania, assimilated to the foreign cultures and are not

planning to come back are regarded as traitors, who put their personal gain before the needs of a nation.

Lithuanian Values and Daily Life

In terms of business and work ethics, main values in Lithuanian society include:

- hard work

- caring about and saving money for the future

- owning a home and having a family

- loyalty to the employer

- having a prestigious job

- Most Lithuanian people work from 8:00 to 17:00 or 9:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch at 12:00-13:00.

- The commute from home to the work place is short for most people as they live and work in the same city, so a typical day would begin at 06:30 or 07:00, then breakfast and a drive to work (public transportation is also very popular).

- Lithuanians come home after work around 18:00 and spend their free time in front of the TV, working in the house or meeting friends.

- Dinner is usually prepared by the wife, and repairs around the house are expected to be done by the husband.
- Kids are taken to school by car in the morning, but usually they are enrolled into the public school that is nearest to the family's home.
- School lessons start at 8:00 and end between 12:00 to 15:30 depending on the children's age.
- Children are usually home before their parents. Then they have to do homework.
- Younger children usually spend the whole day at kindergartens unless they have grandparents who look after them.
- Saturdays and Sundays are free for most people.

Children learning about Lithuanian traditions at a "Family Centre"

- *Compare the daily routine of people in your home country and the one in Lithuania.*
- *Has your family's daily routine changed after moving to Lithuania?*
- *Do you have the same work-related values in your home country as do Lithuanian people?*

Lithuanian ethics, virtues, and morale

Lithuanian etiquette

Lithuanian daily and annual routine

Education and success: definition and associated values in the host society

Education is very important to Lithuanian people, it is greatly valued. That is why most of the education is public, funded by taxpayer money, and mandatory, from the age of 6 or 7 to 16. Most people graduate from high school and acquire university education, 99,8% of Lithuanians are literate.

According to the Law on Education of 1991 (last amended in 2006), education is an activity intended to provide an individual with a basis for a worthy independent life and to assist them in the continuous cultivation of abilities. The value of education was very accurately described in the 7th edition of the World Data on Education: "Education protects and creates national identity. It guarantees continuity of the values that make a person's life meaningful, that grant social life coherence and solidarity, and that promote development and security of the State. Education serves its purpose best when its advancement leads the overall development of society. Therefore, education is a priority area of societal development that receives State support."

The amended Law on Education set these main goals for education:

- to develop a young person's values enabling them to become an honest, knowledge-seeking, independent, responsible and patriotically-minded person;
- to identify a young person's creative abilities and upon this basis to help them acquire a vocational qualification and competence conforming to contemporary culture and technology;
- to reinforce the capability of society to ensure sustainable development of the country's resources;

- to convey to each person the basics of national and ethnic culture, the traditions and values of the humanistic culture of Europe and of the world, to foster the maturation of each person's national identity, moral, aesthetic and scientific culture and personal outlook;
- to convey to each person the basics of national and ethnic culture, the traditions and values of the humanistic culture of Europe and of the world, to foster the maturation of each person's national identity, moral, aesthetic and scientific culture and personal outlook.

In terms of higher education, there are several universities that are considered to be prestigious, those are Vilnius University, Mykolas Romeris University, the Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences in medical sciences, and some others. However, other public universities are considered second-choice by most of the society – for those students who couldn't get into the best ones. Some private universities are even less respected, rumoured to accept rich but uncapable students. Technical colleges are regarded as even less prestigious.

When it comes to jobs, prestigious jobs are those that provide either a good salary or society's admiration. Professions such as doctors, teachers, public servants, are admired and valued. However, the independence and new economic opportunities have changed the way the younger generation thinks and what it values. One of most popular majors at universities and colleges has become Business Management. Students started breaking the old rules of minimalism and internalised guilt of owning more things than necessary and started seeking well-paid jobs in search for an economically better life.

Success in the Lithuanian society is now considered having a well-paying job, rather than having a meaningful job. Other signs of success include

having a good education (at one of the top Lithuanian universities, or, better yet, a university abroad), owning a house (rather than an apartment), a car, having a family, and time for some hobbies.

Lithuanian education system

What are the definitions of success in your culture? Are they similar to the ones in Lithuania?

Detailed information about Lithuanian education system

Wikipedia article about education system in Lithuania

Hospitality and courtesy rules in the Lithuanian society

Hospitality

Lithuanians may seem more reserved at first glance, but they tend to open up the more you know them. Many Lithuanians, although they live in apartments in urban areas, have summer vacation houses in the countryside where they frequently spend weekends and holidays. These homes, or dachas, usually are near a body of water, and have a sauna as well as a garden. It is common for Lithuanians to have good friends come to stay for the weekend at places such as these.

Meeting and Greeting

Most Lithuanians greet each other with a smile along with a handshake and direct eye contact. Once a relationship has been formed, it is acceptable to hug upon greeting a friend. However, it's important to allow your Lithuanian friends to decide when your friendship is close enough to indicate this level of intimacy. People are called by their formal titles (Ms, Mrs, or Mr) followed by their family name. You should not use someone's first name until invited to do so.

Gift Giving

If welcomed to a Lithuanian home, you should remember to bring flowers, wine, or candy to give to the hostess. You should give an even number of flowers and remember not to give chrysanthemums. They are used for funerals. Also, white flowers are a no-no- as they are used for weddings. Presents are often opened as soon as they are received.

Dining

There are usually not strict rules about how to behave at the Lithuanian table. You should wait to be seated. You should hold your fork in your left hand and your knife in your right. Hands should be kept visible.

Your first portions of food should be small, as you may always accept seconds. You should try everything placed on the table. Hosts offer the first toast, although this is done primarily with hard liquor. It is acceptable for you to make your own toast later in the mealtime.

Protocol Related to Business

In business transactions and relationships, one should exercise formality and err on the side of conservative protocol. There are generational differences between how younger entrepreneurs and older professionals interact. Younger professionals deal more directly in less of a hierarchical structure and do what is necessary to make a deal, whereas there is a formal structure and rules inherent to doing business with the older and more traditional generation.

Communication and Relationship Building

Lithuanians work hard at building friendships out of business relationships and seek to build mutual understanding primarily through getting together face-to-face. This is a sign of hospitality and you are expected to accept such offers and reciprocate in kind, to show sincerity and true friendship. Lithuanians are only open to conducting business once a relationship has been established. Initial contacts should be made with people in positions of authority with the ability to make a decision, as Lithuania remains somewhat of a hierarchical culture, and you should remember to convey respect to those in positions of responsibility and authority.

Many Lithuanians are known for being hard-working, although they seldom brag about their work, as that would show arrogance. However, Lithuanians are still impressed by status and are thus interested in titles and advanced university education, so this should be communicated to indicate the degree of respect you should be accorded within your company.

Lithuanians are not highly passionate or emotional speakers. They speak quietly and keep their hands to themselves when speaking, often coming off as aloof or distant upon first meeting.

As in many other countries, you will encounter bureaucracy in Lithuania. One mustn't show anger or lose patience when dealing with this, and it is considered very impolite to interrupt others in conversation or negotiations.

Hierarchies still exist in Lithuanian business, and usually people only speak with others of the same level or rank. For this reason, it is seen as improper for a junior staff member to address a senior member directly.

- What similarities and what differences have you noticed in courtesy rules in Lithuania and your native country?
- Were you shocked by anything during your first interaction with Lithuanian people?
- How do you eat pizza in your home country? Would you be shocked to see Lithuanians eating pizza with ketchup and / or mayonnaise sauce?
- When you first arrived in Lithuania, did you notice people smiling? Do you think people in Lithuania generally smile or look angry / sad?
- It is interesting that American visitors usually immediately notice that Lithuanian people look gloomy and unhappy, whereas one Turkish businessman pointed out the opposite – he said people always smile here!

Lithuanian etiquette rules

Simple DOS and DON'S in Lithuania

Lithuanian lifestyle: culture, music, sports, cuisine, and more

Imagine that you have to write a blog article introducing one aspect of life in Lithuania. What would you write about – food, housing, education, business? What advice would you give? Make an outline of your article including at least 3 points.

Read the following extracts from an Australian traveler's blog about his first impression of going to a supermarket in Lithuania.

"

In English, it's 'milk', in Danish, it's 'maelk', in German it's 'milch', but in Lithuanian? Pienas! Ok, fair enough, even if you're in China and can't read at least you can look for a carton with a picture of a cow on it or something. Not so in Lithuania. All I could see was line upon line of orange cartons with what was presumably the name of the company stenciled on the side. I needed help so I went and performed an embarrassing mime act to the sour faced old biddy at the checkout. (you try and mime 'milk' and you'll know what I mean.) She looked at me for a long moment, then quickly wrote me out of her immediate universe and began serving the next customer. Red-faced and none the wiser I head back to the dairy section and grabbed what I guessed was milk, paid and left. Still feeling like I'd dropped in from planet idiot, I made my coffee and watched in horror as the milk curdled in the cup. Turns out I'd brought something akin to yoghurt called Kefyras. Too mortified to head back to the supermarket, I decided to go to the pub.
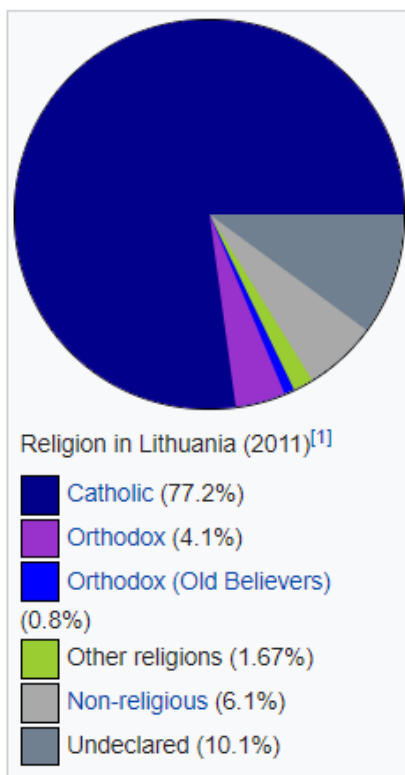"

Have you had similar experiences in supermarkets in Lithuania? Make a list of product names in Lithuanian that you usually buy at he supermarket.

Main religious customs and taboos in the Lithuanian society

Religion in Lithuania (2011)[1]
- Catholic (77.2%)
- Orthodox (4.1%)
- Orthodox (Old Believers) (0.8%)
- Other religions (1.67%)
- Non-religious (6.1%)
- Undeclared (10.1%)

The primarily religion in Lithuania is Christianity, of which the largest denomination is Roman Catholicism. Following that is the Eastern Orthodox religion (4.1%), more specifically the Russian Orthodox church attended by ethnic Russians.

Christian Lithuania celebrates many traditional Roman Catholic holidays, including Easter, Christmas, and Christmas Eve (for the older generation). There is a Lithuanian version of the Mexican holiday Day of the Dead, known as the Day of the Souls. These holidays are celebrated as family days and are celebrated irrespective of religion.

Christmas Eve (December 24th)

Christmas Eve is more important, especially among the older generation, than Christmas itself. People don't have to work and the family gathers together in the evening to share a special vegetarian (fish permitted) meal with at least 12 dishes. It is customary to try all the dishes presented. People traditionally pray before the meal. The first thing eaten is similar to a Communion wafer (Kalėdaitis). This wafer is inscribed with Christian symbols. Everyone has a different wafer which they break apart and exchange to others. Once all pieces have been eaten, then you may proceed on to the next dish.

Children get presents on Christmas day. Kalėdų senelis (Santa Claus or more specifically the Christmas Grandfather), comes overnight before Christmas Day and leaves gifts under the tree. Adults exchange gifts with family members on Christmas Eve and at another time with colleagues and friends.

Christmas (December 25th and 26th)

On Christmas, the family unites for dinner. The day after Christmas (December 26th) is also a holiday. Nearly all Lithuanian homes are decorated with Christmas trees adorned with garland and lights. Every family has a different tradition for how they decorate their family tree. Many go to church on Christmas, whether or not they are religious. The end of the Christmas holiday is known as Epiphany which occurs on January 6th and commemorates the visit of the three kings who visited baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

Easter

After Christmas, Easter is the next most popular holiday in Lithuania. Lithuanians honour Christ's passion by going to church on numerous days throughout Holy Week starting on Palm Sunday and culminating on Easter Sunday.

On Palm Sunday, churchgoers bring their own homemade palms to church to be blessed. Holy Thursday is a day for cleaning to guarantee ensure a year of bounty and health. Everything is washed and scrubbed in anticipation of Good Friday. Holy Saturday is spent decorating Easter

eggs (margučiai) and preparing the traditional Easter Sunday dinner. Easter eggs are stained with natural colors taken from soaking plants, fruit, and vegetables in vinegar. The **Easter Granny (Velykų Bobutė)** brings Easter eggs and candies to children. Homemade Easter egg baskets are prepared by the children and left outside their homes for the Granny to place her eggs. Children are very excited to wake up on Easter, as they get to go out and look for the magical treasures left behind by her.

All Saints Day, November 1st **and Day of the Souls (Vėlinės)** on November the 2nd

Lithuanians visit cemeteries where deceased relatives reside and place candles on their graves (and also place candles other uncared for graves). One should visit cemetaries on this holiday, as these places are transformed into spectacles in the evening, as most graves are covered with candles. Many believed that souls would return to earth on this day and for this reason, favorite meals are sometimes left behind for deceased family members as well.

Užgavėnės, or Shrove Tuesday (similar to Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras in the West)

This day is a Lithuanian version of Halloween. Lithuanians make scary masks, and dance around in public. Children visit homes and ask for pancakes or money. This holiday is celebrated by the ritual burning of Morė (a woman who represents winter) and the ritual struggle between Lašininis and Kanapinis. Lašininis represents meat-eaters, and therefore he is always beaten by Kanapinis, who represents vegetarians, to herald the start of the Lenten fasting season.

[Religious customs and celebrations in Lithuania](#)

[Lithuanian Easter egg decorations](#)

[Lithuanian superstitions and taboos](#)

[Shrove Tuesday celebration](#)

Do you have same or similar holidays in your home country? Were you shocked by any of Lithuanian traditions?

[A funny article](#) about strange Lithuanian superstitions

[Unique Lithuanian traditions](#)

[Lithuanian customs](#)

Application of cultural knowledge in daily life

Read the following questions and think about what you would do.

You have been living with your family in a flat in a Lithuanian city surrounded by neighbours, many of whom you have not even met before. One day you hear the news that a man from your building has died in an accident and his funeral is going to be held tomorrow.

Do you go to the funeral? Do you bring anything? If you decide to bring something to the family, what would it be – food, flowers, money?

You have been living with your family in a small village in Lithuania. One day you hear the news that the former head teacher of the local school has died of old age. You had seen her many times, and although you had never spoken to her at length, you had met her before.

Do you go to the funeral? Do you bring anything? If you decide to bring something to the family, what would it be – food, flowers, money?

In Ancient Lithuania, death was seen as the natural conclusion of life. Death was not a topic to be avoided, and people discussed it often. Even small children were aware of death. Rituals surrounding a person's death included a three-day wake at home. Deceased members of the community were dressed in nice clothes and surrounded by candles. People brought flowers and would come to honour the deceased during this time.

Funerals included songs, chants, and prayers. The community would come together, and sometimes people would even be hired to weep and mourn at a funeral! White head scarves were worn by the women during these occasions.

After a funeral service, a small pine tree would be cut down and displayed to represent the deceased person. People would mourn and separate themselves from all community events for a certain period of time.

Nowadays, Lithuanians are less open about death. Viewings are held at funeral parlours. People don't bring candles or food. They bring flowers or money. Prayers and music are still included, often performed by professional musicians. Modern services are more personalized, and people often wear black. People gather for a reception afterwards to share food and memories of their dearly departed.

Review of Chapter 2

Lithuania is the largest of the three Soviet Baltic republics. Unlike its sister states Latvia and Estonia, Lithuania has had a long history of independence. In the 13th century Lithuanian territory expanded from the Baltic to the Black Sea. In 1990 Lithuania was the first one of the Soviet states to declare its independence. Lithuania joined the EU in May 2004.

Ethnicity. To many Lithuanian people their ethnic identity is very important and serves as the main source of their national traditions.

Language. The Lithuanian language is believed to be one of the oldest in the world and is probably what defines the Lithuanian people.

Religion. Lithuanian people are mostly Catholic but have always been tolerant to other faiths.

Holidays. Lithuania has a lot of holidays, both local and international, Catholic as well as originating in the pagan traditions.

Suggested group activities

Activity 1: Holiday season

Almost all cultures and nations have some kind of celebrations around December. In your group take turns to tell your native country's traditions and compare them to others.

Activity 2: The story of your name

Where does your name come from? Share the story of where your name comes from and what your name means. This helps to build intercultural respect and understanding. The facilitator could find a Lithuanian name with a similar meaning.

Activity 3: Have you ever?

The trainer may ask questions about past experiences. If you have done it, raise your hand and talk about it with others who have also done it. Possible questions:

1. Have you ever climbed to the highest point in your country of birth?
2. Have you ever lived overseas for more than 1 year?
3. Have you ever sung karaoke?
4. Do you have both a brother and a sister?
5. Have you ever ridden a horse?
6. Can you speak 3 or more languages?
7. Have you swum in 3 or more different oceans?
8. Have you ever flown an aeroplane?
9. Have you broken 3 or more bones in your body?

10. Have you done volunteer work sometime in the last month?

11. Have you ever climbed a tree?

12. Have you ever had a close relative who lived to over 100?

13. Have you ever cooked a meal by yourself for more than 10 people?

14. Have you ever had a pet?

15. Have you ever been parachuting or done a bungee jump?

16. Have you ever seen a polar bear?

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What did I learn?

Assessment 1: Milestones in the history of the host society shaping its national identity

This first task will assess your knowledge of the history of the host society. Below, you will find a number of questions and multiple-choice answers – it is your task to pick the correct answer for each question. Only one option is correct.

1. **What is the capital city of Lithuania?**

   a) Kaunas

   b) Trakai

   c) Vilnius

2. **Who was Lithuania's first and only king?**

   a) Vytautas

   b) Mindaugas

   c) Jogaila

3. **Which country did Lithuania form a Commonwealth with in 1569?**

   a) Poland

   b) Russia

   c) Latvia

4. **Which of these did not happen during the Russian rule after the split up of 1772 – 1795?**

   a) Lithuanian language was banned

   b) Catholic religion was suppressed

   c) Russia sought to prevent any kind of autonomy in the former Lithuanian territory

5. **When was Lithuania briefly independent from Russia?**

    a) 1928-1940

    b) 1908-1940

    c) 1918-1940

6. **When did Lithuania restore its independence from the Soviet Union?**

    a) 1993

    b) 1990

    c) 1989

7. **What organisation did Lithuania NOT join in 2004?**

    a) European Union

    b) NATO

    c) EBPO

Assessment 2: Key principles of the host society

You will be given a number of statements below pertaining to key principles of the host society, and your task is to decide whether these statements are true or false. If you think a statement is false, why this is.

1. **Lithuanian legal system was created similar to various laws of Western European countries.**

    True or False?

2. **If the EU regulations are in conflict with the Lithuanian laws, usually the EU regulations are applied.**

    True or False?

3. **The minimum age for buying alcohol is 18.**

    True or False?

4. **The political system is democratic, but the Communist and National socialist parties are allowed to be established.**

    True or False?

5. **People are free to practice any religion and wear religious clothing.**

    True or False?

6. **Voting is mandatory.**

    True or False?

7. **Discrimination (sexual, racial, ethnic, religious, social, etc.) is banned.**

    True or False?

8. **Dual citizenship is permitted.**

    True or False?

9. **Cars drive on the right side of the road.**

    True or False?

10. **Free education is available to all Lithuanian citizens until the age of 18.**

    True or False?

Assessment 3: Host society's perception of family life

Below you will find a passage that contains a number of mistakes. Your task is to spot the mistakes – you can e.g. highlight, circle or underline the parts of the text that you think are wrong.

There are approximately 2 million people in Lithuania and there are no significant conflicts within the society. Its culture is influenced by Eastern cultures, especially Russia. A typical family consists of two parents and two children. Unmarried couples usually don't live together until they are married. Younger Lithuanians treat older people with respect and use honorific language, whereas older people treat younger members of society less formally. In cities it is uncommon for neighbours living in the same apartment building to not even say "hello". Since Lithuania became a member of the EU and many people emigrated to Western Europe, people have kept in touch with their friends and relatives abroad. Those who left Lithuania, assimilated to the foreign cultures and are not planning to come back are regarded as entrepreneurs and treated with respect. In terms of business and work ethics, main values in Lithuanian society include hard work, caring about and saving money for the future, owning a car and having a family, loyalty to the employer, and having a prestigious job. Most Lithuanian people work from 8:00 to 18:00 or 9:00 to 19:00 Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch at 12:00-13:00. School lessons start at 8:00 and end between 12:00 to 15:30 depending on the children's age. Younger children usually spend the whole day at home with hired nannies or at day care provided by the parents' workplace.

Assessment 4: Education and success: definition and associated values in the host society

For this task you need to fill in the blanks. You are given a number of statements regarding education and success with crucial words removed. It is your task to think of the correct word for each gap.

1. According to the _____ ____ _____ of 1991 (last amended in 2006), education is an activity intended to provide an individual with a basis for a worthy independent life and to assist them in the continuous cultivation of abilities.

    a) Constitution of Lithuania

    b) Law on Education

    c) Curriculum for Education

2. According to the amended Law on Education, one of the main goals for education is to develop a young person's _____ enabling them to become an honest, knowledge-seeking, independent, responsible and patriotically-minded person

    a) values

    b) patriotism

    c) reading

3. Another goal for education is to identify a young person's creative abilities and upon this basis to help them acquire a _____ _____ and competence conforming to contemporary culture and technology;

    a) school diploma

    b) vocational qualification

    c) professional training

4. **The top universities in Lithuania are considered Vilnius University, _____ _____ _____ , the Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences in medical sciences, and some others.**

   a) Lithuanian Academy of Music

   b) Vilnius Academy of Arts

   c) Mykolas Romeris University

5. **One of most popular majors at universities and colleges has become _____ _____.**

   a) Business Management

   b) Financial Mathematics

   c) English Literature

Assessment 5: Hospitality and courtesy rules in the host society

This assessment will focus on hospitality and courtesy rules in the host society. Below you will find questions, and it is your task to come up with the right answers for each question.

1. **What is the most common method of greeting in Lithuania?**

2. **When visiting someone's home, what could you bring for the host?**

3. **How should you hold your fork and knife when dining in Lithuania?**

4. **How should you behave when meeting someone for the first time in a business situation?**

5. **What should you do if a business partner of a colleague invites you to a get together outside of work?**

Assessment 6: Main religious customs and taboos in the host society

You will be asked a series of multiple-choice questions in relation to main religious customs and taboos in the host society. Your task is to pick the correct answer.

1. **In 2011, 77% of the people living in Lithuania stated their religion as...?**

   a) Orthodox

   b) Jewish

   c) Catholic

2. **What proportion of the population stated that they had no religion in 2011?**

   a) 57%

   b) 34%

   c) 6%

3. **Which holiday is celebrated on 24 December?**

   a) Christmas

   b) Christmas Eve

   c) Day of the Souls

4. **The end of the Christmas holiday is known as Epiphany which occurs on...?**

   a) 31 December

   b) 1 January

   c) 6 January

5. **What do Lithuanian people do on All Saints Day (1 November)?**

   a) decorate eggs

   b) eat 12 vegetarian dishes

c) visit cemeteries where deceased relatives reside and place candles on their graves

6. **On Palm Sunday, what do churchgoers bring with them to church?**

   a) homemade palms

   b) a communion wafer

   c) nothing

7. **Who supposedly brings Easter eggs and candies to children?**

   a) Santa Claus

   b) their parents

   c) The Easter Granny

8. **What holiday is the Lithuanian Užgavėnės similar to?**

   a) Ash Wednesday

   b) Mardi Gras

   c) Three Wise Men

For the correct answers, click here.

CHAPTER 3: INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

What will I learn?

The relation between culture, language, and communication

Different communication patterns across cultures, including non-verbal communication

Basic rules of intercultural communication

Why is it important?

Having good intercultural communication skills allows us to deal across cultures, which is increasingly important nowadays, as the world is getting smaller through affordable air travel, internet, English becoming an international language, and of course, migration. Intercultural communication skills are tremendously important when communicating with people from our children's multicultural school environment, be it other parents, teachers, or school staff. The world getting smaller doesn't mean the world becoming identical, it means having more and more contact with people who are culturally different from us. Being able to deal with this cultural difference not only peacefully, but also creatively and innovatively, is becoming a very important skill that allows us to thrive in a global world, as citizens, community members, and parents. Speaking English or the country's local language and getting acquainted with different customs isn't enough, we have to understand non-verbal communication that happens across cultures. After all:

> *"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said." – Peter Drucker*

Relation between language, culture, and communication

It is commonly accepted that language is a part of culture, and that it plays a very important role in it. Some social scientists consider that without language, culture would not be possible. Language reflects culture, and at the same time is influenced and shaped by it. In the broadest sense, it is also the symbolic representation of a people, since it comprises their historical and cultural backgrounds, as well as their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking. Brown (2008:171) describes the two as follows: "A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture." In a word, culture and language are inseparable.

Some authors have talked about language, culture, and communication, using the following metaphors. Some people say that language is the mirror of culture, in the sense that people can see a culture through its language. Another metaphor used to symbolize language and culture is the iceberg. The visible part is the language, with a small part of culture; the greater part, lying hidden beneath the surface, is the invisible aspect of culture. Brown's understanding of language and culture is conveyed through the following three metaphors.

From a philosophical view:

LANGUAGE + CULTURE → A LIVING ORGANISM

flesh   blood
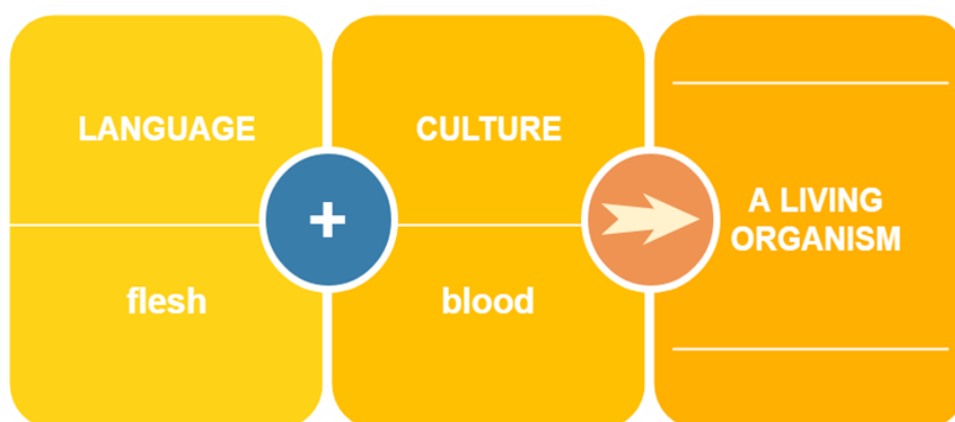
Language and culture makes a living organism; language is flesh, and culture is blood. Without culture, language would be dead; without language, culture would have no shape.

From a communicative view:
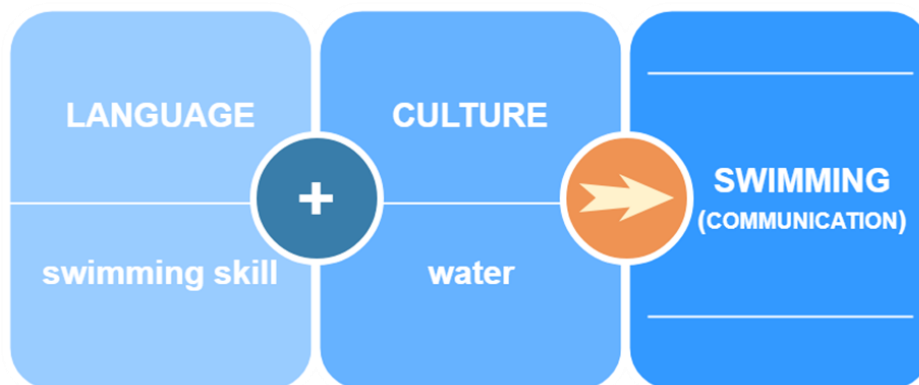
Communication is swimming, language is the swimming skill, and culture is water. Without language, communication would remain to a very limited degree (in very shallow water); without culture, there would be no communication at all.

From a pragmatic view:
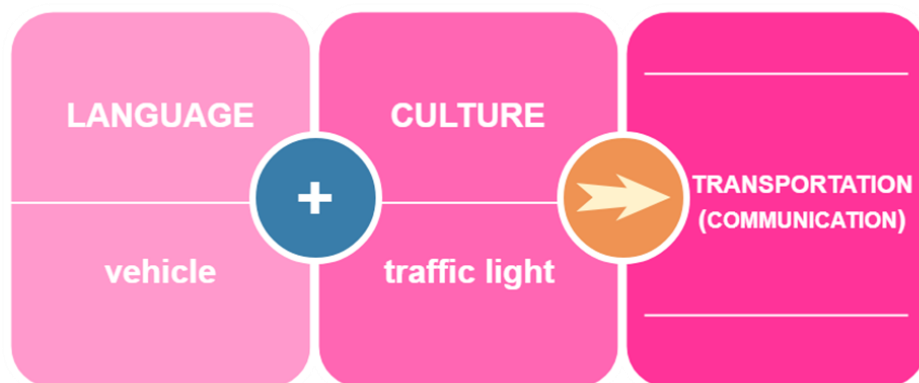
Communication is like transportation: language is the vehicle and culture is the traffic light. Language makes communication easier and faster; culture regulates, sometimes promotes and sometimes hinders communication.

In a word, language and culture, as different as they are, form a whole.

This is a video explaining how language shapes the way we think. [Does language shape how we think?](#)

– Can you think of some characteristic expressions in your language that bear a strong cultural meaning? How easy is it to translate them into another language?
– Can you think of a word you adopted from another language because no word of your language can describe that thing or concept?
– Read how one Indian student describes different communication patterns she encountered in the United States. Have you had similar experiences when communicating with people from a different culture?

A graduate student from India noted the U.S. patterns of greeting (Rothlauf, 2015, p. 95). In her native culture people only say hello to those they know. Initially, she was surprised by the frequency with which Americans greet each other; she later became disillusioned:

I thought, they are really interested in how I am. Then . . . "I'm fine and how about you?" Then I realized that people are really not interested in the answer. It is just a way of acknowledging you.

For further study we suggest you take a look at this short article about the relation between language and culture. At the bottom of the webpage you can also find links to other useful articles.

[The Relationship between Language and Culture](#)

Basic notions of verbal communication

Verbal communication, i.e. words that we say and hear, helps us express ourselves and understand others. We use it to ask questions that give us information. We also use verbal communication to describe things, people, and ideas. Words help us inform, persuade, and entertain others. Our personal relationships are formed through our verbal expressions. Language is expressive. Verbal expressions help us communicate our observations, thoughts, feelings, and needs.

There are three important factors that we need to take into account in verbal communication:

Formulation: Is my message expressed in a *clear, coherent* and *complete* way? Is all important information explicitly included?

The **medium**: It is important to check for: clear and correct *pronunciation* and *articulation*; correct *grammar* and *syntax* and *fluent* expression.

The **receiver**: Is the message *complexity* and *courtesy* level appropriate for the particular receiver in the given context? Is there consideration for the receiver's *viewpoints, background* and *mind-set*?

Especially when communicating with people from other cultures, it is very easy to be misunderstood, because of the differences in linguistic skills, sense of humour and mind-sets. Therefore, it is especially important to avoid certain negative ways of verbal communication that can destroy interpersonal relationships:

- **Global labels.** Don't label anyone as irresponsible, untrustworthy, selfish, or lazy. Such judgments and generalizations can only make the situation worse.

- **Sarcasm.** "No, you didn't miss anything in class on Wednesday. We just sat here and looked at each other." Although sarcasm is often

expressed as humour, through it people usually communicate negative feelings.

- **Dragging up the past.** People bring up negative past experiences when they don't want to discuss a current situation. It may also mean that they have been holding grudges.

- **Negative comparisons.** Comparing a person to other people can lead to feelings of inferiority and resentment. Parents and teachers may unfairly compare children to their siblings.

- **Threats.** Threatening someone with violence usually signals the end of productive communication. It also shows a person's insecurity.

– Review the types of unsupportive messages discussed here. Which of them do you think has the potential to separate people the most? Why?

– Which one do you have the most difficulty avoiding (directing toward others)? Why?

For a detailed explanation of the principles of verbal communication and self-assessment exercises, read the following article:

Oral Communication: Some Basic Principles

Basic notions of non-verbal communication

Verbal messages are of course an important part of our communication, but the way we communicate non-verbally is equally, and sometimes more, important. Non-verbal communication includes the following:

- Tone of voice

- Rate and volume of speech

- How we articulate our words

- Rhythm, intonation and stress placed on words

- Facial expression

- The amount of eye contact we make

- Gestures/touch

- Body language and posturing
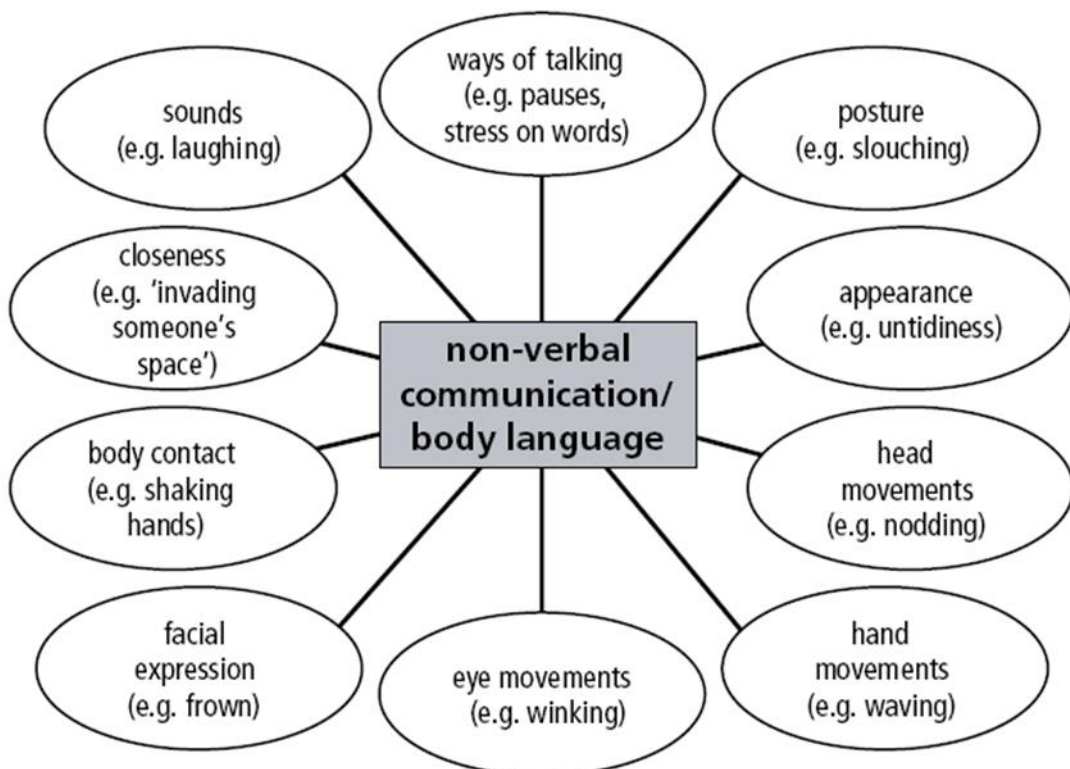
Aspects of non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication:
- can **complement**, **reinforce**, **substitute**, or **contradict** verbal messages;
- influences others;
- **regulates conversational flow** by signalling the beginning and end of conversational turns and the beginning and end of an interaction;
- **affects relationships**, since we use it to communicate emotions;
- **expresses our identities**, as who we are is conveyed through the way we set up our living and working spaces, the clothes we wear, our personal presentation, and the tones in our voices.

Research shows that when we communicate **feelings** and **attitudes** a significant part of our overall message comes from body language and the tone of voice. More than our words, non-verbal messages can often be unintentional and spontaneous, or even beyond voluntary control (like pupil dilation). Therefore, many people tend to rely more on the non-verbal cues than on the spoken word.

Gestures in different cultures, international etiquette: _Cultural curiosities_

Importance of eye contact in Western cultures: _Non-Verbal Communication: Eye Contact Avoidance_

In this article you can learn how to improve your non-verbal skills:

Reading Body Language and Improving Your Nonverbal Skills

- When someone sends you a mixed message in which the verbal and non-verbal messages contradict each other, which one do you place more meaning on? Why?

- Our personal presentation, style of dress, and surroundings such as an apartment, car, or office send non-verbal messages about our identities. Analyse some of the non-verbal signals that your per sonal presentation or environment send. What do they say about who you are? Do they create the impression that you desire?

- Can you recognize any specific non-verbal communication features that represent your culture and you use them in your daily life?

- Please think of two of your children's teachers. With whom do you feel more comfortable to discuss with about the performance of your children and with whom are you absolutely not? What is

The impact of non-verbal communication

Read the following study about the impact of positive non-verbal communication.

A study conducted by Hyunwoo Jung and Euichang Chai (2014) observed the non-verbal communication a physical health teacher gave to his class over an eight-month period for two hours every week. The teacher 'Lee' was observed to be a very optimistic individual who had a lot of compassion for his class. Lee's non-verbal communication such as his facial expressions, clothing choices, voice tone, touch and care were all noted over the eight months. After the eight-month period had commenced, the students were interviewed, and an observation diary had been recorded noting physical interactions within the class and changes in behaviour over the eight-month period. From the results the observer had gained in documentation, it had been evident that the students had come to mimic Lee. The students displayed a sense of compassion and respect to one another, encouragement, cooperation and honesty. When the students were interviewed, they generally seemed to have a very positive outlook on the subject and many believed this was because of the way Lee had taught, treated and encouraging them through his positive, optimistic and friendly nature. It became evident after the case study was completed, that Lee's non-verbal communication had aided in developing the students' values and morals. They were taught how to show respect and care for one another through observing Lee and had also developed a confidence in his ability to teach the subject matter effectively through his professional demeanour combined with his thorough knowledge.

Now think about the following:

- Did Lee give the students any verbal lesson about positive non-verbal communication?

- Think now of your own non-verbal communication habits. Do you perhaps imitate somebody unconsciously (a parent, a teacher, somebody else)?

- What impact might your non-verbal communication style have on your children? Is it what you want?

Characteristic culture-driven communication patterns

Communication, or to be more precise, 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

In **direct** communication style, both the speaker and the listener expect clear (explicit) verbal expression of intentions, wishes, hopes, etc. (e.g., "I am hungry", "I love you"). In **indirect** communication style, the speaker expresses his or her thoughts implicitly, or using hints or modifiers (e.g., "perhaps", "maybe"). The listener is expected to observe and notice the non-verbal communication, to read contextual cues in order to understand the real meaning.

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. Again, there are contextual and individual variations within cultures.

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.

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.

Japanese, Chinese and Indian cultures use social roles to adjust the conversation style. 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.

Instrumental / affective styles

Instrumental and affective communication styles can be also related on one hand to individualism and collectivism, on the other hand to low- and high-context approaches. **Instrumental** communication style is task-oriented and focuses on the speaker; **affective** communication style is process-oriented and focuses on the listener. Verbally this means explicitness (instrumental style) and implicitness (affective style). The instrumental style is gradually becoming the style of international business and other professional contexts, particularly in the Western world.

Article on the *Influence of Socio-cultural Domains on Communication*

An academic read for deeper understanding of culture-driven different communication patterns: **Verbal Communication Styles and Culture**

Reflection exercise on communication styles

1) What is your home country's cultural orientation? Is it any different from how you personally behave?

2) Analyse this table and add your own country to the list if it isn't already there.

Country	direct / indirect	elaborate / exact / succinct	personal / contextual	instrumental / affective
Denmark	direct	exact	personal	instrumental
Egypt	indirect	elaborate	contextual	affective
England	direct	exact	personal	instrumental
Japan	indirect	succinct	contextual	affective
Saudi Arabia	indirect	elaborate	contextual	affective
Sweden	direct	exact	personal	instrumental
USA	direct	exact	personal	instrumental

3) What conclusions can you draw from comparing your country's communication style with the other styles?

Exercise on the recognition of different communication styles

In order to fully understand the different communication styles and the contexts within which they are used, try to find out which communication style the following phrases correspond to:

1. Mrs. Johnson, I'm here to discuss the incident that occurred during the break between my son and another kid.

Direct or indirect?

2. Mrs. Johnson, I would like to ask you if anything happened yesterday because my son came back home and I thought he was frustrated.

Direct or indirect?

3. Mrs. Johnson, I'm here because of the low grade that my son received in the last Math exam.

Elaborate, exact or succinct?

4. Mrs. Johnson, yesterday my son came hesitantly to show me the grade that he received in the latest Math exam. So, I thought that it would be way off better to come by myself to ask about his performance and what we should as parents do in order to support him with his homework.

Elaborate, exact or succinct?

5. Mrs Johnson, one should be very careful when discussing with children about sexual health and reproduction.

Personal or contextual?

6. Mrs Johnson, I know better than anyone how to raise my child.

Personal or contextual?[1]

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[1] 1. Direct; 2. Indirect; 3. Exact; 4. Elaborate; 5. Contextual; 6. Personal

Low vs. high context cultures
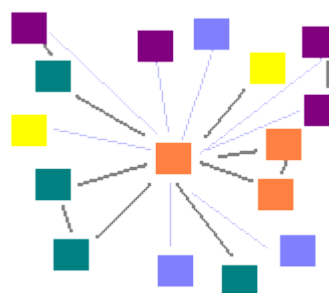
What are low and high context cultures?

According to Wikipedia, **high-context culture** and **low-context culture** are terms used to describe cultures based on how clear and direct the messages communicated by people are and how much the context means in certain situations.

According to the famous anthropologist Edward T. Hall who introduced the concept:

- Messages exchanged in a high-context culture carry indirect meanings with more information than the spoken parts

- In low-context cultures, messages have a clear meaning, with nothing hidden beyond the words used

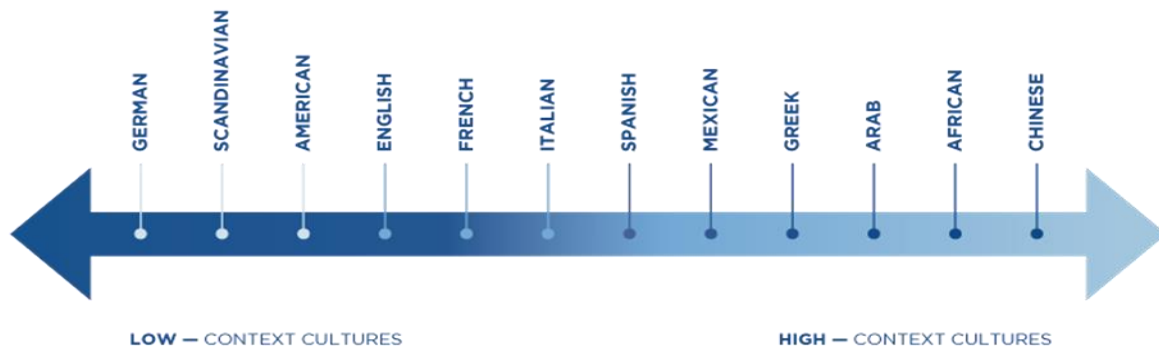High context communication   Low context communication

Higher-context cultures include the Afghan, African, Arabic, Brazilian, Chinese, French Canadian, Filipinos, French, Greek, Hawaiian, Hungarian, Indian, Indonesian, Italian, Irish, Japanese, Korean, Latin Americans, Nepali, Pakistani, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Southern United States, Vietnamese, South Slavic, and West Slavic.

GERMAN SCANDINAVIAN AMERICAN ENGLISH FRENCH ITALIAN SPANISH MEXICAN GREEK ARAB AFRICAN CHINESE

LOW — CONTEXT CULTURES   **HIGH —** CONTEXT CULTURES

Lower-context cultures include the Australian, Dutch, English Canadian, English, Finnish, German, Israeli, New Zealand, Scandinavian, Swiss, and United States.

Entering high and low context situations

Besides the preferred way of communicating within a culture, there are also different communicational settings that may require a different amount of contextual information. For example, high context will be common in situations like family gatherings, a conversation or party with friends, expensive gourmet restaurants, neighbourhood restaurants with a regular clientele, undergraduate on-campus friendships etc. independently of the culture one belongs to. The reason is that these groups of people have a lot in common and do not need to explicitly state everything in order to be understood. High contexts can be difficult to enter if you are an outsider because you don't carry the context information internally, and because you can't instantly create close relationships.

Low contexts are relatively easy to enter if you are an outsider because the environment contains much of the information you need to participate, and because can you form relationships fairly soon. Examples of low context settings are large airports, a chain supermarket, a cafeteria, a

convenience store, sports where rules are clearly laid out etc. where clarity is of great importance and people are not expected to infer or guess the meaning of the messages.

Remember that **every culture and every situation has its high and low aspects**. For instance, a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is usually a low context situation: any parent can join, the dates of the meetings, who is president, what will be discussed, etc. are all explicitly available information, and it is usually fairly clear how to participate in the meetings. However, if this is a small town, perhaps the people who run the PTA all know each other very well and have many common interests. They may "agree" on what should be discussed or what should happen without even talking about it, as they may have unconscious, unexpressed values that influence their decisions. Other parents from outside may not understand how decisions are actually being made. So the PTA is still low context, but it has a high context subgroup that is part of a high context small town society.

Two short presentations about communication in low and high context cultures:

Understanding Cultural Communication Differences

What Is The Difference Between a High-Context and Low-Context Culture?

For further study, here is a tutorial website which also includes very useful videos:

High and Low Context Communication

A collection of misunderstandings that may arise between people of Indian and Western cultures:

Intercultural Communication: Misunderstandings

Choosing an appropriate communication style: a case study

Imagine that you participate in a meeting of the Parent School Organisation where many members insist that all parents should actively take part in the final theatrical event before summer closure by preparing on their own and with their own resources the costumes of the children and the setting of the play. You are willing to participate but your time is limited due to heavy workload and you are also facing financial difficulties. Please reflect on the following questions:

- How will you deny your participation in the theatrical play? Will you speak out your intentions and issues you are faced with or you will try to find a plausible excuse?

- What is the cultural context of the society you are living in? Does it affect the way you react and respond to others?

- Do you think that the answer that you will provide to the Parent Organization will be accepted as it is according to the given cultural context?

Relationship vs. task-oriented cultures

Have you ever asked yourself the following questions?

- *Why is it that Americans and British hardly ever answer the question, "How are you doing?"*

- *Why is it that Indians almost never say "No" if you ask them, "Can you do this?"*

- *Why is it that Koreans and Chinese always want to hang out with their colleagues outside of work?*

The answer lies in a major distinction that shapes every culture – **task oriented vs. relationship-oriented view. There are some cultures that value getting a task done whereas in some other cultures, long term relationships with people matter more than a task they are handling right now.**

Of course, no country falls completely into one extreme or the other. It usually lies somewhere in the middle, some closer to extremes than others. The USA, Canada, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands are examples of task-oriented cultures whereas India, China, Spain, Italy, Greece are examples of relationship-oriented cultures.

What is the difference?

Task-Oriented	Relationship-Oriented
Emphasis on work facilitation	Emphasis on interaction facilitation
Focus on structure, roles and tasks	Focus on relationships, well-being and motivation
Produce desired results is a priority	Foster positive relationships is a priority
Emphasis on goal-setting and a clear plan to achieve goals	Emphasis on team members and communication within
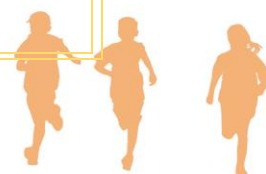
Strict use of schedules and step-by-step plans, and a punishment/incentive system	Communication facilitation, casual interactions and frequent team meetings

Task oriented cultures view dedication to finishing a task as a way to show respect, professionalism, willingness to be a part of the team. You build relationships by proving that you get things done for the team. Any interruptions in the process are viewed as distractions and the lack of commitment, which keep you away from forming meaningful friendships.

In comparison, relationship-oriented cultures allow interruptions by other people because they do not want to be rude and hurt others by not accommodating needs of those individuals. Chatting about stuff that is totally unrelated to a task at hand is essential for forming relationships beyond work environment. Socializing is a big part of work. Even in many last minute or serious meetings in India, you will see that food is an integral part of the meeting. Many times, the task related work is done outside office hours, and planning meetings are used to form relationships.

Quick tips

If you are dealing with somebody in a task-oriented culture:
- Make sure you do your work on time.
- Come prepared to show progress in update meetings.
- Relate everything you say to the task at hand, productivity, and efficiency.

If you are dealing with somebody in a relationship-oriented culture:

- Make sure you ask them how they are at the beginning of every meeting, listen to their answer, and most importantly respond to it!
- Socialize and chat with them during work hours, and outside of work.
- For bonus points, remember their birthday, names of their children, and what they like.

Intercultural Communication: Do I Focus On The Task Or The Relationship?

What is your home country's cultural orientation?

Is it any different from how you personally behave?

Choosing an appropriate relationship approach: a case study

You have recently moved to a new country because you have found a better job there. As a new member in the Parent School Organization you are going to introduce yourself to the upcoming meeting of the parents. In the new school there are also many children from abroad but none of their parents participate in the Parent Organization. You have many ideas regarding the organization of out-of-school activities and you were also actively involved in school matters in the previous school of your children. Please reflect on the following questions:

- Is the country you moved to task or relationship oriented? Does this differ from the culture you belong to?

- What will be your strategy in order to become accepted by the other parents and school staff? How will the specific context of the society affect your strategy?

- How will you present yourself to the other parents?

- How do you intend to present your ideas and know-how on out-of-school activities to the other parents?

Cultural differences in non-verbal communication

Forms of non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication can take many forms. To communicate effectively with people from other cultures it is very important to not only understand what is said but also what is expressed by their body language. Below are samples of seven forms of non-verbal communication, as well as specific cultural examples.

Eye contact

Eye contact carries strong meaning in all cultures – it is important whether eye contact is made, who makes it, and how long it lasts. In many Asian cultures, avoiding eye contact is seen as a sign of respect. However, those in Latin and North America consider eye contact important for showing equality among people. In Ghana, if a young child looks an adult in the eye, it is considered an act of disobedience.

Touch

Many cultural expressions are achieved through touch. In America, for example, using a firm handshake is considered appropriate to greet a stranger or another business professional. In France, however, it is common to kiss someone you greet on both cheeks. Touching children on the head is fine in North America. Yet in Asia, this is considered highly inappropriate, as the head is considered a sacred part of the body. In the Middle East, the left hand is customarily used to handle bodily hygiene. Therefore, using that hand to accept a gift or shake hands is considered extremely rude. There are also a wide range of cultural viewpoints on the appropriate rules regarding physical contact between both similar and opposite genders.

Gestures

Gestures can convey wildly different meanings. Individuals in the United

POTENTIALLY EMBARRASSING GESTURAL MIXUPS

U.S. Gesture	Other Interpretations
Waving good-bye	Come here (Japan)
Good luck sign	Boyfriend (Japan)
Screw you sign	I don't believe you (Uruguay)
OK sign	Money (Japan)
	Sex (Mexico) Homosexual (Ethiopia)
Slash across the throat	Lost job (Japan)

Source: From D. Archer, (1997), "Unspoken Diversity: Cultural Differences in Gestures, *Qualitative Sociology*, 20: 81.

States use the "OK" sign to convey that something is acceptable. In Japan, the same hand symbol means "money." Argentinians, Belgians, the French and the Portuguese all use the symbol to mean "zero" or "nothing." Still other countries in Eastern Europe consider that same sign an offensive swear.

Physical space

Countries that are densely populated generally have much less need for personal space than those that are not. The Japanese, for example, are less likely to react strongly to an accidental touch by a stranger than Americans. Less personal space is also needed in areas such as Latin America, and, in the context of one-on-one conversations, the Middle East.

Facial expressions

Winking is a facial expression particularly varied in meaning. In Latin America, for example, the gesture is often considered a romantic or sexual invitation. The Yoruba people in Nigeria wink at their children if they want them to leave the room. And the Chinese consider the gesture rude.

Posture

Posture can convey power structures, attitudes and levels of civility. Slouching in Taiwan is considered disrespectful, while other parts of the world may not think much of it one way or another. In America, standing with hands on the hips may suggest power or pride, but in Argentina, it may suggest anger or a challenge.

Many cultures also frown upon showing the bottom of the shoe, something that is considered dirty. Therefore, sitting with the foot resting on the opposite knee is strongly discouraged in places such as many Arab countries.

Watch this animated video explaining non-verbal communication with examples: <u>Non-verbal communication</u>

An interesting article that includes culture-specific non-verbal communication examples: <u>Non-verbal communication</u>

An article on how easy misunderstandings can occur because of cultural differences in non-verbal communication: <u>Non-verbal Communication across Cultures: How to Offend and Confuse People Around the World Without Saying a Word</u>

<u>https://nonverbal.ucsc.edu/</u>
This website provided by the University of California-Santa Cruz allows you to explore and test your ability to read and interpret non-verbal communication. The site provides videos that examine non-verbal codes, including personal space and gestures, to better understand cross-cultural communication.

Recognize cultural differences in non-verbal communication

Activity 1

Read the following real-life example about one of the non-verbal communication aspects – one's clothing. After reading, try to remember a similar experience from your life.

When I studied abroad in Europe, London more specifically, our clothing as a nonverbal expression was a dead giveaway that we were from America. We dressed much more casual, wore more colours, and had words written on our T-shirts and sweatshirts. This alone said enough; we didn't even have to speak to reveal that we were Americans. (Martin, Nakayama, 2010, p. 268)

Activity 2

Read the following real-life story about gift-giving. What would be considered an inappropriate gift in your culture? Have you ever made any mistakes in selecting a gift for someone from a different culture?

Giving gifts seems to be a universal way to please someone, if the gift is appropriate. One colleague of mine, Nishehs, once tried to impress our boss, Joe. Nishehs brought a well-wrapped gift to Joe when they first met with each other in person. Joe was indeed pleased as he received the gift from Nishehs, but his smile faded away quickly right after he opened the gift. Joe questioned Nishehs angrily, "Why is it green?" Shocked and speechless, Nishehs murmured, "What's wrong with a green hat?"

The miscommunication resulted from the cultural differences between them. Nishehs is an Indian, whereas Joe is Chinese. For the Chinese, a green hat means one's wife is having an extramarital affair. (Martin, Nakayama, 2010, p. 279)

Activity 3

In line with the above-mentioned real-life scenarios try to think of other incidents of cultural misunderstandings or differences that you have experienced while communicating with parents from another culture, for example in situations like the following:

– exchange of food and recipes

– sports

– tone of voice and expressiveness

– work

– exchange of know-how/ providing guidelines

– argumentation

Principles of intercultural communication

The writer Anais Nin said, **"we don't see things as they are, we see things as we are."** We don't often realize the filter through which we see the world. Sometimes instead of noticing the behaviour and stopping to think what it could mean, we jump to the conclusion about its meaning and feel offended. Communication with people from other cultures is far more rewarding when we are able to understand each other, prevent conflicts and convey trust and good-will. Though there is no single recipe for effective intercultural communication, below you will find some basic principles. They guide the process of exchanging meaningful and clear information across cultural boundaries, in a way that keeps mutual respect and minimizes hostility.

1. **Recognise the cultural communication norms**
   o Use the knowledge you acquired in the previous sections to identify whether the other person(s) comes from high or low-context cultures, relationship or task oriented and if they communicate in an elaborate, exact or succinct manner.

2. **Focus on understanding**
   o Ask open-ended questions
   o Be non-judgmental
   o Do not express disagreement immediately
   o Be aware that what is initially presented may not actually be the case
   o Listen to others and give them time to tell their story in their own way and own words

- o   Others may need to develop a sense of trust before they are willing to share their vulnerabilities

3. **Acknowledge and respect cultural differences rather than minimize them**
   - o   Inquire about and acknowledge any cultural/ethnic/racial differences
   - o   If appropriate ask if there is anything about the cultural/ethnic/racial background of your interlocutors which they feel you need to know
   - o   Ask if there is anything in general they would like to know about your culture to better understand your viewpoint

4. **Focus on similarities**
   - o   Work
   - o   Family life
   - o   Leisure activities

5. **Treat all people with dignity and respect**
   - o   Keep an open mind
   - o   Keep it simple
   - o   Speak in a polite manner
   - o   Avoid making judgments and assumptions

> *Which of the principles of effective intercultural communication do you think you are already applying, and which ones need the most work?*
>
> *Identify how you became so competent at the first one and some ways that you can improve the second one.*

[Learn about cultural differences in 6 minutes](#)

[How Culture Drives Behaviours](#)

An interesting blog article that gives useful tips for effective intercultural communication: **Intercultural Communication Tips**

A website featuring a collection of intercultural communication case studies in four languages – English, French, Italian, and German: **https://miccases.wordpress.com/**

An interesting approach to motivating people to understand that other cultures approach problems differently: **Who do you save?**

An interesting study concerning the **Role of Cultural Background in a Parent-Teacher Relationship**

Simple techniques for effective intercultural communication

Every culture has its own communication patterns and assumptions about appropriate body language. Even when there is no language barrier, cross-cultural communication may be challenging. Below you will find top ten useful tips for effective cross-cultural communication, taken from Chrysos.org:

1. Maintain etiquette

Many cultures have specific etiquette around the way they communicate. Before you meet, research the target culture, or if time allows, do some cross-cultural training. For example, many cultures expect a degree of formality at the beginning of communication between individuals. Every culture has its own specific way of indicating this formality: 'Herr' and 'Frau' in Germany, reversing family and given names in China and the use of 'san' in Japan for men and women etc. Be aware of these familiarity tokens and don't jump straight to first name terms until you receive a cue from the other person to do so.

2. Avoid slang

Not even the most educated non-native English speaker will have a comprehensive understanding of English slang, idioms and sayings. They may understand the individual words you have said, but not the context or the meaning. As a result, you could end up confusing them or at worst, offending them.

3. Speak slowly

Even if English is the common language in a cross-cultural situation it's not a good idea to speak at your normal conversational speed. Changing
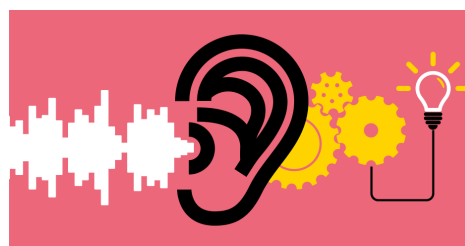
your pace will help, as will speaking clearly and pronouncing your words properly. Break your sentences into short sections and give your listener time to translate and digest your words as you go. But don't slow down too much as it might seem patronizing. If the person you're speaking to is talking too quickly or their accent is making it difficult for you to understand them, don't be afraid to politely ask them to slow down too.

4. Keep it simple

In a cross-cultural conversation there's no need to make it harder for both of you by using big words. Just keep it simple. Two syllable words are much easier to understand than three syllable words, and one syllable words are better than two syllable words. Say "Please do this quickly" rather than "Please do this in an efficacious manner."

5. Practice active listening

Active listening is a very effective strategy for improving cross cultural communication. Restate or summarize what the other person has said, to ensure that you have understood them correctly, and ask frequent questions. This helps build rapport and ensures that important information doesn't get missed or misunderstood.

6. Take turns to talk

Make the conversation flow more freely by taking it in turns to speak. Make a point and then listen to the other person respond. Particularly when people are speaking English as their second language it's better to talk to them in short exchanges rather than delivering a long monologue that might be difficult for them to follow.

7. Write things down

If you're not sure whether the other person has understood you properly, write it down to make sure. This can be particularly helpful when

discussing large figures. For example, in the UK we write a billion as 1,000,000,000 but, in the USA, it's written as 1,000,000,000,000.

8. Avoid closed questions

Don't phrase a question that needs a 'yes' or 'no' answer. In many cultures it is difficult or embarrassing to answer in the negative, so you will always get a 'yes' even if the real answer is 'no'. Ask open-ended questions that require information as a response instead.

9. Be careful with humour

Many cultures take business very seriously and believe in behaving professionally and following protocol at all times. Consequently, they don't appreciate the use of humour and jokes in a business context. If you do decide to use humour, make sure it will be understood and appreciated in the other culture and not cause offence. Be aware that British sarcasm usually has a negative effect abroad.

10. Be supportive

Effective cross-cultural communication is about all parties feeling comfortable. In any conversation with a non-native English speaker, treat them with respect, do your best to communicate clearly and give them encouragement when they respond. This will help build their confidence and trust in you.

Effective Intercultural Communication

Reflection on effective intercultural communication

What is the appropriate behaviour in your culture when facing the following situations?

1. Answering a phone during a meeting (business, social, formal, informal)

2. Speaking to people differently, based on their gender, age, job title, etc.

3. Voicing opinions during a work meeting or parent meeting

Do you know of other cultures that have different behavioural norms?

Try this: In the next parent meeting ask 2 or 3 parents from other cultures about the norms of their cultures in the situations just described.

Review of Chapter 3

In this chapter "Intercultural communication principles", you have learned about the close relationship between language, culture, and communication. Communication largely depends on the person's native culture, and culture, as we have learned, varies greatly in many different aspects. There are low context vs. high context cultures, as well as relationship-oriented vs. task-oriented cultures. Based on these differences, there are even more culture-specific communication styles. By applying basic intercultural communication principles we can enjoy good relationships with people from other cultures and prevent conflicts.

Suggested group activities

Activity 1

A key function of verbal communication is expressing our identities. Ask the learner group to identify labels or other words that are important for their identity in each of the following contexts: academic (e.g. honours student), professional (e.g. manager), personal (e.g. single mother), and civic (e.g. independent).

Now have learners compare their responses. Did they notice any differences in the choice of words or importance of identities depending on the cultural background?

Activity 2

Purpose: To give you first-hand experience in how communication may occur non-verbally.

Procedure:

- Choose a partner or one will be assigned to you.

- Choose a subject that you both feel you can talk about. You will be talking to each other for a while, so either choose a good topic or have back-up topics. (Movie preferences? Restaurant options?)

- While talking to each other, take the following positions (about 2-3 minutes each):
  o Standing far apart
  o Standing very close together, face to face (almost touching)
  o Both of you sitting down
  o One person standing up, the other person sitting down (change places so that each person fulfils both roles)

- o One person talking while the other person non-verbally communicates that he/she is not listening (change places so that each person fulfils both roles)
- o One person talking while the other person non-verbally communicates that he/she is actively listening (change places so that each person fulfils both roles)

Processing/Discussion Questions:

We may do this in class, or you may have to write your answers to the following questions. If this is a written assignment, you need to thoughtfully answer all parts of each question, using examples, at least one paragraph in length.

- *Was there any position that you felt very uncomfortable communicating in? Why (or why not)?*

- *Specifically, how did you feel when you were sitting down while talking to your partner, who was standing up? Do you think other people would have felt the same way? Why or why not?*

- *When you tried to communicate that you were not listening to your partner, what non-verbal cues did you use? Do you think they effectively communicated your (feigned) disinterest? What did your partner do during this time that caused you to believe your non-verbal communication of disinterest was effective (or ineffective)?*

- *When you tried to communicate that you were actively listening to your partner, what non-verbal cues did you use? Do you think they effectively communicated your (genuine) interest? What did your partner do during this time that caused you to believe your non-verbal communication of interest was effective (or ineffective)?*

- *What did you learn from this experience? Did you find it helpful to you in your personal or professional life? Why or why not?*

Activity 3

1. Separate students into groups of two.
2. Determine one student in each group as student A, and one as student B.
3. Give each student a copy of the following script.
4. Student A will read his/her lines out loud, but student B will communicate his/her lines in a non-verbal way.
5. Provide B with a secret emotional distraction that is written on a piece of paper. For example, student B may be in a rush, may be really bored, or maybe feeling guilty.
6. After the dialogue, ask each student A to guess what emotion was affecting the student's partner student B.

Dialogue:

A: Have you seen my book? I can't remember where I put it.

B: Which one?

A: The murder mystery. The one you borrowed.

B: Is this it?

A: No. It's the one you borrowed.

B. I did not!

A: Maybe it's under the chair. Can you look?

B: OK--just give me a minute.

A: How long are you going to be?

B: Geez, why so impatient? I hate when you get bossy.

A: Forget it. I'll find it myself.

B: Wait—I found it!

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Page 115: https://www.seek.com.au/career-advice/3-reasons-why-active-listening-is-a-must-have-skill

Page 118: https://www.businesscommunicationarticles.com/importance-of-cross-cultural-communication/

What did I learn?

Assessment 1: Relation between language, culture and communication

Below you will find four statements. Your task is to decide whether these statements are true or false. Once you have completed the three statements, there is a further question in relation to the final statement. If you think a statement is false, consider why this is.

1. **Language is not connected to culture.**

   True or False?

2. **Some argue that without language culture would not exist.**

   True or False?

3. **If we liken communication with transportation, then language is the traffic lights and culture is the vehicle.**

   True or False?

4. **If we liken language and culture to an iceberg, the visible part is language with a small part of culture, and the greater part hidden beneath the surfaced is the invisible aspect of culture.**

True or False?

Assessment 2: Basic notions of verbal and non-verbal communication

*Below you will find a short paragraph about verbal and non-verbal communication. There are a number of **mistakes** and it is your task to spot them. You can highlight, circle or underline the sections that you think are incorrect.*

Verbal communication does not help us express ourselves and understand others. It is important that your message is expressed in an unclear, incoherent and incomplete way. Especially when communicating with people from other cultures, it is difficult to be misunderstood, because most people across cultures share the same linguistic skills, sense of humour and mind-sets. Using the following tools can help build strong interpersonal relationships: sarcasm, dragging up the past and threats. The way we communicate non-verbally is not very important at all compared to verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes things like your tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, body language and the words that you use. Research shows that when we communicate feelings and attitudes our body language and tone of voice do not matter at all. More than our words, non-verbal messages are always intended and planned. Therefore, many people tend to rely more on the non-verbal cues than on the spoken word.

Assessment 3: Characteristic culture-driven communication principles

For this task, you need to match the communication style on the left with the correct explanation on the right. The communication styles and the explanations are currently mismatched, so it is your task to find the correct pairings.

1.	Direct communication	a)	The speaker expresses his or her thoughts implicitly, or using hints or modifiers (e.g., "perhaps", "maybe"). The listener is expected to observe and notice the non-verbal communication, to read contextual cues in order to understand the real meaning.
2.	Indirect communication	b)	The verbal message is considered as only a part of the message. Lot of information is transmitted via silence, indirectness, understatements and pauses. This communication style is typical of the Japanese culture.
3.	Succinct communication	c)	Both the speaker and the listener expect clear (explicit) verbal expression of intentions, wishes, hopes, etc. (e.g., "I am hungry", "I love you").

Assessment 4: Low vs. high context cultures

Look at the list of different scenarios below. Your task is to decide whether these are examples of low or high context situations.

1. **Attending a family gathering where your auntie discusses her nephew's work. As she does this, she raises an eyebrow and everyone in the group laughs.**

   Low or high context?

2. **Paying for the bus fare.**

   Low or high context?

3. **Visiting the post office to send a letter to your friend who lives abroad.**

   Low or high context?

4. **Attending a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting at the local school.**

Low or high context?

Assessment 5: Relationship vs. task-oriented cultures

Below you will find a list of examples. Your task is to decide whether each example on the left is a characteristic of either relationship orientation or task orientation. Please write your answers in the empty columns on the right-hand side. Following this first exercise, you will then asked to think of tips for dealing with both relationship oriented cultures and task oriented cultures.

Characteristics	Relationship or task orientation?
1. Emphasis on work facilitation	
2. Focus on relationships, well-being and motivation	
3. Focus on structure, roles and tasks	
4. Emphasis on interaction facilitation	

Assessment 6: Cultural differences in non-verbal communication

You will be given a number or statements with crucial information missing. Below the statement you will find multiple-choice options – it is your task to pick the correct answer to fill in the gap in the statement.

1. **In _____, if a young child looks an adult in the eye, it is considered an act of disobedience.**

   a) USA

   b) Ghana

   c) Brazil

2. **Many cultural expressions are achieved through _____. In France, for example, it is customary to kiss someone you greet on both cheeks.**

    a) Eye contact

    b) Posture

    c) Touch

3. **Gestures can convey wildly different meanings. Individuals in the United States use the "OK" sign to convey that something is acceptable. In Japan, the same hand symbol means "_____".**

    a) Money

    b) Love

    c) Insult

4. **Countries that are densely populated generally have much less need for _____ than those that are not. The Japanese, for example, are less likely to react strongly to an accidental touch by a stranger than Americans.**

    a) Quiet spaces

    b) Personal space

    c) Living space

5. **_____ is a facial expression particularly varied in meaning. In Latin America, for example, the gesture is often considered a romantic or sexual invitation. The Yoruba people in Nigeria _____ at their children if they want them to leave the room. And the Chinese consider the gesture rude.**

    a) Smiling

    b) Winking

    c) Sticking your tongue out

6. **Posture can convey power structures, attitudes and levels of civility. In _____, standing with hands on the hips may suggest power or pride, but in _____, it may suggest anger or a challenge.**

    a) Germany / India

    b) Nigeria / Pakistan

    c) America / Argentina

Assessment 7: Principles of intercultural communication

Below you will find statements relating to different principles of intercultural communication. It is your task to decide whether the statements are true or false – you can circle or underline the correct answer. If you think a statement is false, try and think about why that is.

1. **You can treat all people with dignity and respect by keeping an open mind, speaking in a polite manner and avoiding making judgements and assumptions.**

    True or False?

2. **It is a good idea to try and minimise any cultural differences and to sweep them under the carpet.**

    True or False?

3. **Focusing on similarities such as work, family life and leisure activities is a good way to build bridges.**

    True or False?

4. **It is important to focus on understanding: don't express disagreement immediately, listen to others, and let them tell their story in their own words.**

    True or False?

Assessment 8: Simple techniques for effective intercultural communication

You will find four statements below. It is your task to decide whether these statements are true or false. If you think the statement is false, think about why this is. Circle or underline the correct answers.

1. **In a cross-cultural conversation there's no need to make it harder for both of you by using big words. Just keep it simple.**

    True or False?

2. **2   It is a good idea to use slang (informal language; 'frenemy', for example, is a combination of 'friend' and 'enemy') and it will not confuse things.**

    True or False?

3. **You will never cause offence by using humour in a business context.**

    True or False?

4. **Active listening is a very effective strategy for improving cross cultural communication.**

    True or False?

For the correct answers, click here.

LINK TO UNIT 2

Continue to **Empowering migrant and refugee parents for social inclusion.** There you will find:

Chapter 1: Integration: What it means and what it does not mean

Chapter 2: Integration: Benefits for the child and the society

Chapter 3: Understanding the educational system and the opportunities it offers

Chapter 4: Support of school activities for the development of interculturalism

APPENDIX

Answer sheets to assessment activities

<u>**Chapter 1**</u>

Assessment 1

1. Being aware of your self-identity and self-perception may help you to adjust better to the host society and become a better person but this depends on the choices you will make based on your awareness. The statement that it is not possible to understand other people is an exaggeration.

2. b) Self-perception is learned and two of its main components are self-esteem and self-image.

3. d)

4. d)

Assessment 2

1. False. Societies are shaped by many factors (such as the historical epoch, values, and common experiences) that do not become obvious by simply using their respective languages.

2. True

3. True

4. False. Values and group norms are part of the hidden body of the cultural iceberg.

5. True

Assessment 3

If you have chosen:

4 or 5 in statement 1,

1 or 2 in statements 2 and 4,

3 in statement 3,

then you have developed good awareness of important factors shaping our self and of the relativity of certain traits we may have.

Assessment 4

1. b)

2. d)

3. c)

Assessment 5

1. a: 2 and 4; b: 1 and 3; c: 5

2. a: 4; b: 1; c: 2

3. a: 2 and 6; b: 3 and 5; c: 1 and 4

Assessment 6

1. a) yes; b) yes; c) no, it's a prejudice; d) no, as a matter of fact cities are noisy and cities in the Middle East tend to be more noisy that in Europe; e) yes; f) no, it's a matter of personal preference; g) no, it's a matter of personal preference

2. a) yes; b) no, this may reinforce your cultural identity but it will most probably not help you in challenging your stereotypes; c) yes; d) yes; e) yes; f) no, this will help your raise your cultural self-awareness

Chapter 2

Assessment 1

1. c) Vilnius

2. b) Mindaugas

3. a) Poland

4. c) Russia sought to prevent any kind of autonomy in the former Lithuanian territory

5. c) 1918-1940

6. b) 1990

7. c) ЕВРО

Assessment 2

1. True

2. True

3. False – the minimum age for buying alcohol is 20.

4. False – Political system is democratic, but the Communist and National socialist parties are not allowed to be established.

5. True

6. False – voting is not mandatory.

7. True

8. False

9. True

10.   True

Assessment 3

The sections that are wrong have been corrected in the answer below – please see the sections that are *emphasized in red*.

There are approximately *3 million* people in Lithuania and there are no significant conflicts within the society. Its culture is influenced by *both the Western and the Eastern cultures*. A typical family consists of two parents and two children. Unmarried couples also *often live together*. Younger Lithuanians treat older people with respect and use honorific language, whereas older people treat younger members of society less formally. In cities it is *not* uncommon for neighbours living in the same apartment building to not even say "hello". Since Lithuania became a member of the EU and many people emigrated to Western Europe, people have kept in touch with their friends and relatives abroad. Those who left Lithuania, assimilated to the foreign cultures and are not planning to come back are regarded as *traitors, who put their personal gain before the needs of a nation.* In terms of business and work ethics, main values in Lithuanian society include hard work, caring about and saving money for the future, owning *a home* and having a family, loyalty to the employer, and having a prestigious job. Most Lithuanian people work from 8:00 to *17:00* or 9:00 to *18:00* Monday to Friday, with a break for lunch at 12:00-13:00. School lessons start at 8:00 and end between 12:00 to 15:30 depending on the children's age. Younger children usually spend the whole day at *kindergartens unless they have grandparents who look after them.*

Assessment 4

1. b) Law on Education

2. a) values

3. b) vocational qualification

4. c) Mykolas Romeris University

5. a) Business Management

Assessment 5

1. Most Lithuanians greet each other with a smile along with a handshake and direct eye contact. Once a relationship has been formed, it is acceptable to hug upon greeting a friend.

2. If welcomed to a Lithuanian home, you should remember to bring flowers, wine, or candy to give to the host.

3. You should hold your fork in your left hand and your knife in your right. Hands should be kept visible.

4. In business transactions and relationships, one should exercise formality and err on the side of conventional protocol.

5. Lithuanians work hard at turning business relationships into friendships and seek to build mutual understanding primarily through meeting face-to-face. This is a sign of hospitality and you are expected to accept such offers and reciprocate in kind in order to show sincerity and true friendship.

Assessment 6

1. c) Catholic

2. c) 6%

3. b) Christmas Eve

4. c) January 6

5. c) Lithuanians visit cemeteries where deceased relatives reside and place candles on their graves

6. a) homemade palms

7. c) The Easter Granny

8. b) Mardi Gras

<u>Chapter 3</u>

Assessment 1

1. False: Language and culture are intimately connected

2. True

3. False: It is the other way around –language is the vehicle and culture the traffic lights. Language makes communication easier and faster; culture regulates, sometimes promotes and sometimes hinders communication.

4. True

Assessment 2

You will find the passage below with the mistakes corrected (see the words/sections *emphasised in red*).

Verbal communication *helps* us express ourselves and understand others. It is important that your message is expressed in a *clear, coherent and complete* way. Especially when communicating with people from other cultures, it is *very easy* to be misunderstood, because of the *differences* in linguistic skills, sense of humour and mind-sets. Using the following tools can *make it difficult to* build strong interpersonal relationships: sarcasm, dragging up the past and threats. The way we communicate non-verbally *is equally, and sometimes more, important*. Non-verbal communication includes things like *your tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, and body language*. Research shows that when we communicate feelings and attitudes *a significant part of our overall message comes from* body language and the tone of voice. More than our words, non-verbal messages *can often be unintentional and spontaneous*. Therefore, many people tend to rely more on the non-verbal cues than on the spoken word.

Assessment 3

1. c)

2. a)

3. b)

Assessment 4

1. This is an example of a high context situation.

2. This is an example of a low context situation.

3. This is an example of a low context situation.

4. This is an example of a low and high context situation: while anyone can join the PTA and the meeting are open, there may be implicit understandings of e.g. what issues can be discussed or what should (or should not) happen at meetings.

Assessment 5

1. Task orientation

2. Relationship orientation

3. Task orientation

4. Relationship orientation

Assessment 6

1. b) Ghana

2. c) Touch

3. a) Money

4. b) Personal space

5. b) Winking

6. c) America / Argentina

Assessment 7

1. True

2. False: Acknowledge and respect cultural differences rather than minimize them. You can for example inquire about and acknowledge any cultural/ethnic/racial differences; ask if there is anything about the cultural/ethnic/racial background of your interlocutors which they feel you need to know (if appropriate); and ask if there is anything in general they would like to know about your culture to better understand your viewpoint.

3. True

4. True

Assessment 8

1. True

2. False: Not even the most educated non-native English speaker will have a comprehensive understanding of English slang, idioms and sayings. They may understand the individual words you have said, but not the context or the meaning. As a result, you could end up confusing them or at worst, offending them.

3. False: Many cultures take business very seriously and believe in behaving professionally and following protocol at all times. Consequently, they don't appreciate the use of humour and jokes in a business context. If you do decide to use humour, make sure it will be understood and appreciated in the other culture and not cause offence. Be aware that British sarcasm usually has a negative effect abroad.

4. True

Back to the assessment activities of Chapter 3

Credits for activity icons

1. Theory - information

https://www.iconfinder.com/icons/103411/book_information_text_icon

2. Think about it

https://www.iconfinder.com/icons/2588764/idea_research_seo_think_icon

3. Additional external sources of information

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4. Reflection exercises

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5. Group activities

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6. Self-assessment exercises

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