

Hi! I'm Thomas! Let's
continue with our course.
We are now in Chapter 4.

Welcome to Chapter 4!

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION



 WINGS

wINGS - "Internationalization serious Game for Start-ups and entrepreneurs", is an EU wide training about essential aspects of the internationalization process.

The wINGS course consists of 6 chapters: Global entrepreneurship mindset, Core competences of entrepreneurship, Management of uncertainty, Intercultural communication, Marketing skills and Business skills.

Throughout our Serious Virtual Game, you will be involved in real-life situations of entrepreneurship and you will acquire the set of competences that will prepare you for a successful internationalization adventure.

wINGS has been created by an association of six organisations specialized in both education and entrepreneurship. If you want to obtain more information about the wINGS project, do not hesitate to contact us on

<https://wings.erasmus.site>



**This is what we will talk
about in this chapter**

TOPICS

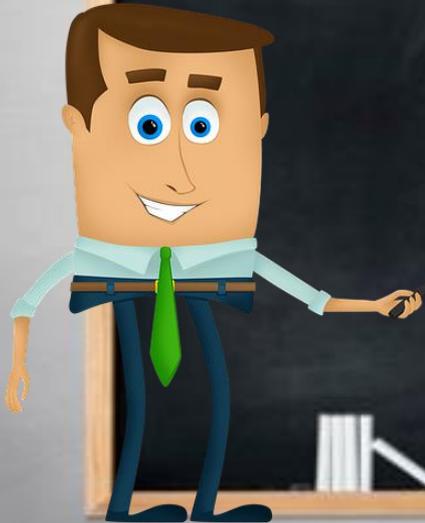
- 1. Intercultural communication**
- 2. Definition of culture**
- 3. Conceptions of culture**
- 4. Dimensions of culture**
- 5. Practical Activities**
- 6. Game Scenario**



Skills and competences pursued

After this chapter
you will be able to:

- Understand what Intercultural communication is
- Know different definitions of culture
- Understand various conceptions of culture
- Describe elements of culture
- Understand culture dimensions



1. *Intercultural communication*

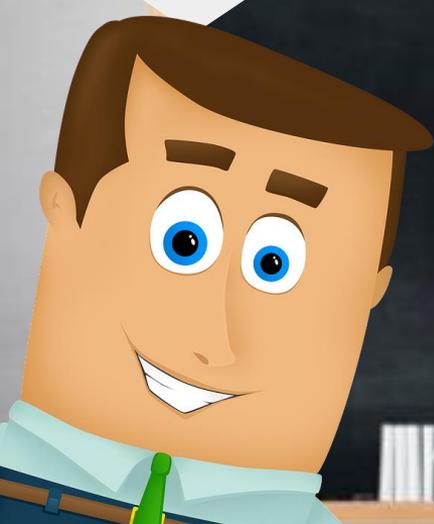


Intercultural communication - definition

The meaning of
intercultural
communication

Intercultural communication is the **verbal and non-verbal** interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds.

It requires to understand language but it is not simply only about knowledge of foreign languages.



Intercultural communication

Knowing a foreign language is the first step in communicating with representatives of other countries and cultures, but it allows to move **only on the level of verbal agreement**.

Very important part of communication includes **body language**, meaning gestures, rituals, face expressions, etc.



Intercultural communication

Non-verbal and context communication is of big importance. Depending on recognized values and reproduced cultural scripts, each message **may have a different meaning**.

Language barriers and lack of consistency in the verbal and non-verbal sphere of communication are often the causes of **misunderstandings and conflicts** between representatives of different cultures.

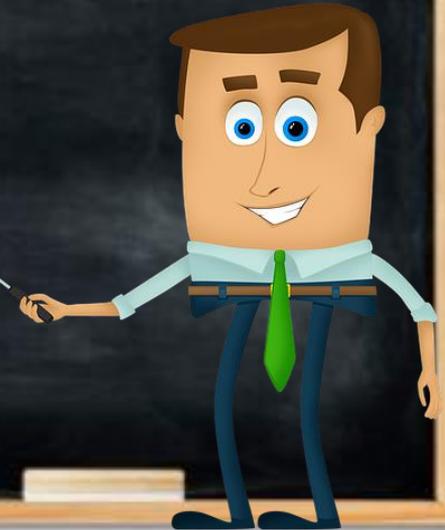


Intercultural communication

Intercultural communication happens **at the touch of cultures** therefore it is necessary to understand what culture is.

To be able to communicate with representatives of other cultures means **to understand, accept and appreciate** values, mind-sets and communication strategies of other cultures.

There is no intercultural communication and understanding without some knowledge about culture and its specific elements



2. Definition of culture

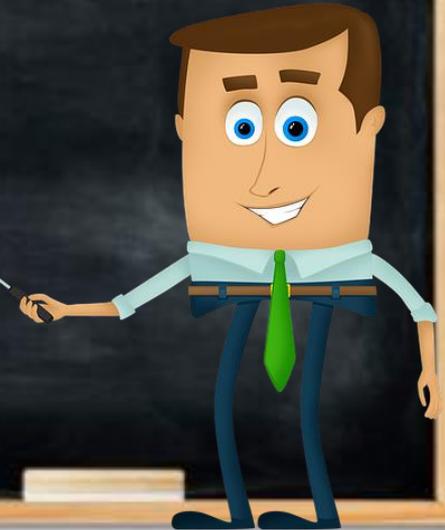


Definition of culture

In 1952 Kroeber and Kluckhohn counted **over 150 definitions** of the term 'culture' (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952).

One of the best-known is the definition of anthropologist Edward Taylor, which describes **culture as a civilization**, a complex organism involving knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, laws, customs and other abilities and habits acquired by people as members of society.

Culture is a broad and ambiguous concept and there are many definitions of culture.



Other definitions of culture

Culture is...

- ❑ a way in which group of people solves problems and settles disputes (Edgar Schein)
- ❑ a the way in which a group of people solve problems (Fons Trompenaars)
- ❑ a collective programming of mind (Geert Hofstede)
- ❑ a structure of meanings according to which people interpret their experiences and direct their actions (Clifford Geertz)



Other definitions of culture

Culture is...

- ❑ a part of the environment which is made by humans (Harry Triandis)
- ❑ a network of beliefs and goals in which each string pulls the other, while being pulled by them, constantly changing the arrangement of the whole (Jacques Barzun)
- ❑ a control over nature (Johan Huizinga)



What is important to understand is what Geert Hofstede proved

Culture

Culture is something that we learn. Its source is **the social environment**, not genes!



3. Conceptions of culture



There are many conceptions of culture, one of them is understanding culture as a system

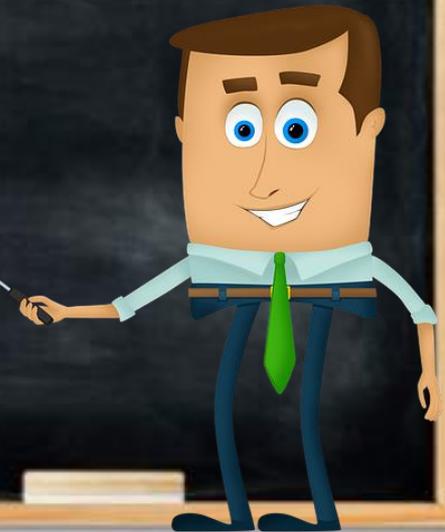
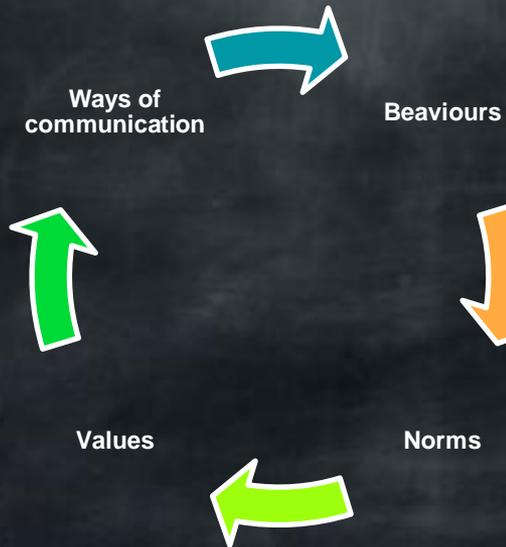
Conceptions of culture

In intercultural psychology, culture is understood as **a system** of values, norms and behaviours that are characteristic for particular groups and nations.

It doesn't mean that everyone shares the same values or behaves in accordance with accepted standards, but **everyone recognizes them** as characteristic of their group.



Culture as a system

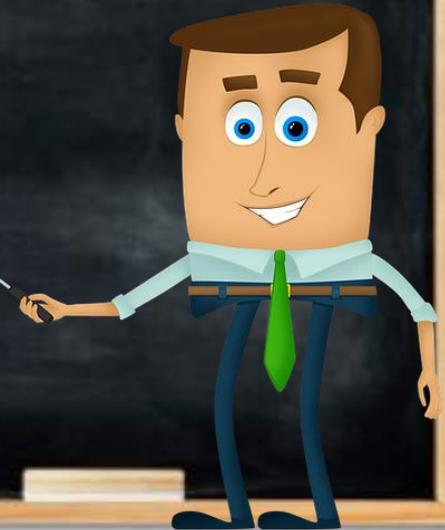


Conceptions of culture

Culture can be compared to **an iceberg** with a visible tip and an invisible part underneath the water surface.

The visible tip corresponds to the areas of culture **we can see** in the physical sense.

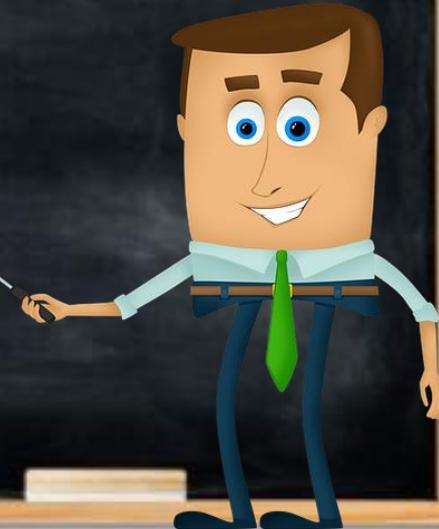
Another popular conception of understanding of culture is the Iceberg Model of Culture



Conceptions of culture



The Iceberg-Model: A clear way to visualise culture



Conceptions of culture

From this concept of culture it can be seen that the visible elements are only a reflection of the invisible ones. Observing culture as an iceberg, the following questions can be answered:

- ❑ **What?** What do I see, what's going on, what are they doing, what are they eating, what are they saying? In order to discover the enormity of information about culture, one must consciously strive, discover, search, and inquire
- ❑ **Why?** why is it important for them, why do they go so, why do they want something other than us?



6. Dimensions of culture



Besides conceptions of culture, there are also various dimensions of culture (cultural dimensions)

Dimensions of culture

For many years, scientists have been researching cultural differences and trying to determine the **dimensions** of culture.

Similarly to the aforementioned fact of the existence of different definitions and concepts of culture, also in the case of cultural dimensions, there are **many models** proposed by researchers.



The concept of cultural dimensions is a tool that has been developed to help us observe, understand and compare cultures.

Dimensions of culture

Cultural dimensions are based on **what can be observed** and what is normal for most members of a certain culture.

It is important to remember to approach another culture **not by looking** at it through one's own cultural lens but by observing it neutrally and by postponing judgments.



The concept of cultural dimensions is a tool that has been developed to help us observe, understand and compare cultures

Dimensions of culture

There are many studies on the division of cultures. The first empirical solution was presented by the Dutch sociologist Geert Hofstede. He distinguished the following dimensions:

- ❑ Power distance
- ❑ Individualism/Collectivism
- ❑ Uncertainty avoidance
- ❑ Masculinity/Femininity



Power distance

- ❑ This dimension concerns the extent to which an imbalance of power is accepted by a culture.
- ❑ A culture with highly hierarchical structures has a high power distance.
- ❑ Cultures with low power distance have very flat hierarchies.



Individualism/Collectivism

- ❑ This dimension is the answer to the dilemma of how relations between individuals and groups should be regulated.
- ❑ Members of collectivist cultures try to align their goals with the goals of their social group.
- ❑ Members of individualist cultures regard themselves primarily as autonomous individuals and aim to reach their personal goals independently.



Uncertainty avoidance

- ❑ This dimension is about tolerance of uncertainty about expectations and about the future.
- ❑ In cultures with high uncertainty avoidance, unclear, situations can create disorientation therefore rules regulating private and public life are strictly followed.
- ❑ In cultures with low uncertainty avoidance, chaos and unclear situations are reacted to with relative ease and rules regulating private and public life are less strictly followed.



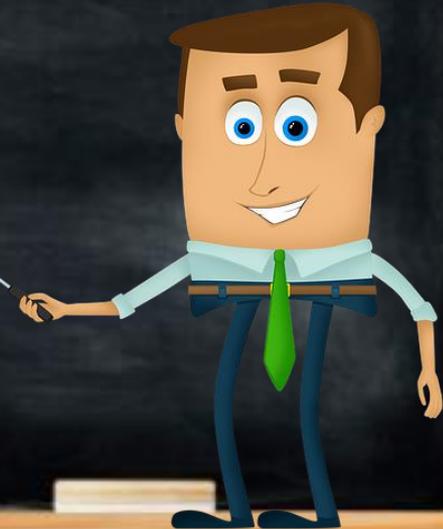
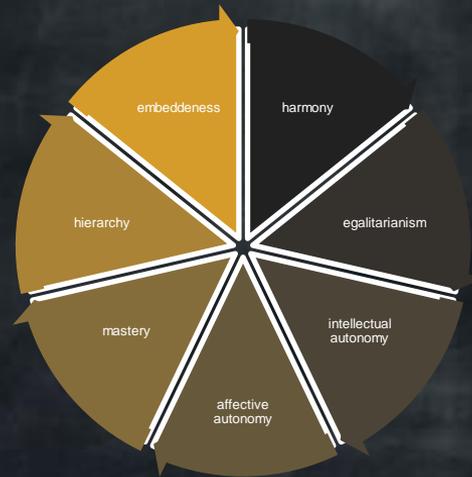
Masculinity/Femininity

- ❑ This dimension illustrates the relations between women and men in regards to their social and gender roles and their significance.
- ❑ In masculine cultures, the social roles are clearly separated. The male role is characterized by high performance and dominance. The feminine role is characterized by caring, modesty and subordination.
- ❑ In feminine cultures, roles are not defined by specific characteristics and almost all roles in society can be filled by women as well as by men.



Dimensions of culture

Another distinction was proposed by Shalom Schwartz who proposed the following dimensions:



PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES



1. Identify if the following statements are true or false:

a) Intercultural communication is the verbal and non-verbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds.

b) Non-verbal and context communication doesn't have big meaning when it comes to intercultural communication.

c) Culture is something that people can learn.

d) From the Iceberg model of culture it can be seen that the visible elements are only a reflection of the invisible ones.

e) Cultural dimensions are based on what can be observed and what is normal for most members of a certain culture.



2. Complete the following sentences:

- a) Intercultural communication happens at the touch of -----, therefore it is necessary to understand what it is.
- b) To be able to communicate with representatives of other cultures means to understand, ----- and appreciate values, mind-sets and communication strategies of other cultures.
- c) According to Geert Hofstede, culture is a collective ----- of mind.
- d) Cultural dimensions are based on what can be ----- and what is normal for most members of a certain culture.
- e) Uncertainty avoidance is about tolerance of uncertainty about expectations and about -----.



DESCRIPTION OF A GAME SCENARIO







External Resources

1. *Hall, E. T. (1976). Beyond Culture. New York: Anchor Books.*
2. *Hofstede G., (2000). Kultury i organizacje. Zaprogramowanie umysłu, Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, Warszawa.*
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4. *Trompenaars, F. (1997), Riding the Waves of Culture. 2. ed., London, Boston: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.*
5. <http://interculturalism.blogspot.com/2011/03/iceberg-model-of-culture.html> (06.12.2019)
6. <https://vocal.erasmus.site/category/modules/module-5/> (10.12.2019)

