

## MODULE 5 - Multicultural Dialogue – Communication

Length of each module: 6 to 10 pages

### Module description

Dialogue is a moment of encounter and, sometimes, of confrontation. When people from different countries meet, there could be some misunderstandings occasionally, due to different social and cultural values and social perceptions. This work aims to offer two different contributions to the development of dialogue and intercultural communication:

- on the one hand, theoretical contents and interpretations regarding communication and dynamics influenced by cultural differences, as well as indications of possible training courses;
- on the other hand, insights and operational tools to foster a multicultural process between the diversity expressed in the encounter between subjects from different backgrounds.

To foster the deconstruction of social and cultural perceptions, this module is structured in several interactive activities to amplify the opportunity to actively question, deconstruct and reconstruct perceptions, hence, bringing together people with different social and cultural backgrounds.

### Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this module you will be able to:

- Identify similarities and differences between different cultures;
- Comprehend how to contain anxiety and to identify and address prejudice towards people of different linguistic-cultural origins;
- Comprehend how to calmly resolve the issues that arise from intercultural and multilingual misunderstandings;
- Recognise the expression of a second or foreign culture in it;
- Develop a capacity for cultural transition, thanks to which identifying oneself, even if only temporarily, with the other culture, through participation in activities to be carried out cooperatively with others (mentees);
- Develop empathy, recognizing that culture influences the perception of an interlocutor, and to understand one's own mood as well others' mood;
- Apply knowledge and understanding. Participants will be able to apply knowledge and understanding to develop problem management skills;

- Develop learning skills (as well as self-learning), which will allow mentors to experience a mode of communication starting from an intercultural mediation capacity after the conclusion of this module.

### Theoretical and Contextual Background

Studies in the field of interculturality recognize four moments in the development of intercultural competence: knowledge of the environment in which we live / of foreign culture, comparison between one's own culture and that of the environment/foreign, awareness of differences, acceptance of differences. The understanding of another culture in one's environment or of a foreign culture is conditioned by comparing this culture with one's own. Approaches to intercultural competence focus on the need to acquire cognitive frameworks useful for cultural analysis, as well as the need to overcome ethnocentrism, to develop appreciation and respect for one's own culture and cultural difference, to understand and acquire skills in cultural adaptation processes and manage identity issues raised by intercultural contact and mobility. Therefore, it is necessary to set the goal of developing cultural models as minimal units of cultural analysis. It will be important to educate both to attend to other cultures and the changes that are developing particularly quickly in our contemporary society. Therefore, interculturality cannot be achieved through fragmented and occasional paths but must be achieved by taking small steps that are coordinated with each other, through a systematic project, and, hopefully, in the family and society as a whole. Indeed, interculturalism has a transversal and interdisciplinary character. Thus, the study (and the understanding) and personal growth are conditioned by the involvement in activities prolonged over time and can also be carried out independently, not only by observation, but also by carefully listening, and memorization a large amount of data provided. The participant's active involvement passes through different forms of work, such as group work, project work, integrated learning, among others. To make an intercultural path effective, it is necessary to rethink the methodologies applied in the process. The intercultural approach applies to any discipline, to any segment of knowledge, to any curriculum. It is not a question of adding new topics to a traditional curriculum but rather of applying a different method of organizing the curriculum, which must be reviewed in terms of contents, methodological choice and educational goals.

### Content/Topics

This module will discuss the several topics through the following activities:

1. Linguistic history aims to bring out the multiple linguistic repertoires, connecting them to places, people, contexts and activities in which known languages are brought into play. It is an exercise that stimulates self-awareness of one's own linguistic heritage, feelings incorporated and connected to the wording used in terms of identity and representation. From a social point of view, it offers the opportunity to learn about the existing linguistic variety, enhance resources, and strengthen 'weak' identities and languages.
2. "Nice to meet you, I am..." is an activity that aims to define culture (cultural awareness), which wants to understand that differences can be determined by cultural aspects, but also by personal choices and preferences. This activity favours the identification of those cultural aspects that affect their behaviour. That, sometimes, can make it challenging to understand the behaviour of others.
3. The activity interview without words favours the process of knowing oneself and the other and wants to reflect on the concept of identity, ethnocentrism, the relativity of the point of view and non-verbal communication. The proposed activities help reflect on stereotypes and non-verbal communication linked to the first impressions made when meeting a person.
4. Tolerance alone is not enough. Why? It leads us to understand that familiarity, cooperation and working with people from different linguistic, religious and ethnic groups are necessary for intercultural dialogue. It is essential to address issues about prejudices and their intercultural competencies to overcome them during the activity.
5. In the activity "Perception of the other", different perceptions are examined to understand that many times the perception of a certain situation/behaviour is linked to the education received and to the culture in which we were born in and live in. Similarly, the images and perceptions we have of a certain country and its inhabitants, may be far from reality. Sometimes, this is based on stereotypes, general and summary views of reality; sometimes, these perceptions arise from preconceived ideas from prejudices that can also cause wrong behaviour. Often there is a tendency to generalize, for instance, some people may think that to know a person from a foreign country is representative of all the rest of the population of that same country, who share similar characteristics; in this way, a limited knowledge can lead erroneously to mythologise a nation or to despise it. To deconstruct

such social perceptions, this activity's goal is to raise the awareness that people often talk about things that they do not know (or only know one aspect of it), and because this may lead them to draw wrong conclusions.

**Supporting material** for practising/understanding/implementing the method (Exercises, Case studies, Videos, Interactive resources)

*Additional Resource 1*

Title:	<b>“Interview without words”</b>
Description:	<p>Through the use of cartography different from the traditional one, it is possible to introduce the planisphere as a real vision of the world, ethnocentrism, economic and political equity, colonialism. In general, the participants will certify their origin. Then we descend from the general to the particular, with a work that verifies the need for mediation processes through which stereotypes can be broken down.</p> <p>Skills to be developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect on the concept of stereotype and on the concept linked to the first impressions that are made when one encounters one, acquiring the value of cultural and social mediation</li> </ul> <p>Indications</p> <p>Materials: different types of planispheres • interview sheet</p> <p>FIRST PHASE</p> <p>The trainer asks to create a tree in whose branches each participant inserts the name, who they come from, and what historical information the name brings: origin and meaning. This information will be collected within another tree.</p> <p>After this work, the trainer puts a planisphere in the center of the room and asks the participants to position themselves inside the room as if the planisphere had the</p>

	<p>dimensions of the available space. The trainer will give indications in relation to one of the family members. The participants will have to position themselves in the room according to the geographical origin of the member in question.</p> <p>Case one: the participant does not know the provenance of a particular family member: he/she can position himself/ herself based on his/her origin.</p> <p>Case two: the family member is not present (deceased or has left the family unit). The participant can position himself/herself about the origin of the absent member if he/she knows him/her; otherwise, it is placed on his/her personal origin.</p> <p>Using different planispheres (such as the inverted planisphere) helps to reflect on the representation of the world but also to question the ethnocentric vision to which one is accustomed. For example, the European participants will no longer be grouped in the center of the planisphere but also in different positions, depending on the chosen cartographic representation. The trainer will decide what information he/she will ask the participants about the place where they are positioned.</p> <p><b>SECOND PHASE</b></p> <p>Create pairs of participants trying to ensure that the participants do not know each other or do not know each other. Each member of the pairs has 10 minutes to complete the interview grid about their partner. It is absolutely forbidden to talk; they can look at each other, possibly use gestures. It is not important to arrive at conclusions faithful to reality; each hypothesis is correct as part of the exercise itself. At the end of ten minutes, the two participants will be able to talk and discuss the interview contents without words, taking note of any interesting and useful elements to complete the picture.</p> <p><b>THIRD PHASE</b></p> <p>Each participant introduces the partner to the group, underlining particularly interesting elements that are</p>	
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	<p>emerging during the confrontation phase, in which the verbal exchange is allowed.</p> <p>FOURTH PHASE</p> <p>The trainer must be particularly attentive during this phase to avoid stereotypes and prejudices that can be reinforced or preserve the performance of the activity. They will reflect on the first impression that drives the perception and how personal feelings and knowledge influence that impression (some information may have been acquired during the first activity). Participants will be able to tell their first impressions. The fact that no verbal exchange is allowed during the interview underlines, even more, the importance of the non-verbal elements of communication.</p>
<p>Link to resource:</p>	<p><a href="http://www.petersmap.com">http://www.petersmap.com</a></p>
<p><b>Challenges and tips for professionals/mentors</b></p>	
<p><b>Duration</b></p> <p>The duration of this block is approximately 2 hours.</p>	
<p><b>Quiz / Self – assessment activity</b></p> <p>By interaction, we mean an intercultural dialogue of which competence is needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Social</li> <li>B. Non-verbal</li> <li>C. Communicative</li> <li>D. Linguistic</li> </ul> <p><b>Correct Answer: C.</b></p> <p>For good cultural mediation, we need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. to focus only on one's own culture of belonging</li> <li>B. welcome</li> <li>C. becoming aware of diversity and knowing the culture of those in front of you</li> <li>D. to know Languages</li> </ul> <p><b>Correct Answer: C.</b></p>	

- A good mentor will be the one who
- A. places only his/her needs at the centre
  - B. wants to value only the culture of the one who welcomes
  - C. opens up new perspectives of intercultural dialogue by opening up to forms of cultural mediation
  - D. speaks fluently more than a language

**Correct answer: C.**

### Sources

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### TOPIC 1 – LINGUISTIC HISTORY

*Will this topic be adapted to capsules: no*

*Which format would you like to suggest: PowerPoint presentation*

### Topic description:

Linguistic history: from a social point of view, linguistic history offers the opportunity to learn about the linguistic variety present in the narrative and discourses of each individual by enhancing resources and strengthening 'underrepresented' identities and languages. It aims to bring out the multiple and diverse linguistic repertoires of the subjects, connecting them to the places, people, contexts and activities in which the languages are brought into play.

### Read

*It is fundamental and necessary to promote multilingual education through the use and enhancement of diversity in knowledge processes, to encourage the learning of autobiographical meanings attributed by different people with different languages which would promote the comparison on what it means to know / learn a language.*

*An activity to work on linguistic history may be based on exchange and interaction. For instance, ask each person to exchange ideas and reflections on the important languages in their lives, and its relevance in personal experience and their symbolic placement; reflect on the monolingual idea and what we mean by mother tongue. It is also important to discuss how the various languages already 'inscribed' in our body influence the learning experience of new languages. The whole discussion will focus on the meaning of different languages in each person's life experience, and on the relationship between language, social relationships, and emotional/affective experiences.*

### TOPIC 2 – “NICE TO MEET YOU, I AM...”

*Will this topic be adapted to capsule: yes*

*Which format would you like to suggest: interactive activity*

#### Topic description:

Through the interactive activity "Nice to meet you, I am ..." the trainer encourages the participants to identify cultural aspects that affect individuals behaviour and that can make it difficult for others to know how to behave. It aims to define the culture of belonging (cultural awareness).

*The trainer prepares a list of cultural elements in the form of questions and writes the following statements on the board:*

- 1) I am different from others;*
- 2) I have many things in common with my family, my community, my friends;*
- 3) Others need the same things I need.*

*Participants are asked to discuss in groups and share ideas that support these statements. The trainer writes the following question on the board and asks each mentee to propose answers:*

- 1) What is typical of my country, group, and why?*

*The trainer will point out that people belonging to one group may be different from another group. Each one of us believes we know our country well. However, there are different ways of seeing or doing the same thing.*

*The trainer should ask the mentees to identify some of these differences and try to clarify why people present themselves differently. The trainer will explain that there are natural needs that are shared by all human beings (food, shelter, sleep, etc.), while everything else - including how these needs are met (eating with cutlery or with sticks, do not eat pork or horse, live in a house or a caravan, sleep on a mattress or futon) - is attributable to differences, elements that are transmitted from generation to generation. At this point, the trainer underlines how alongside the cultural aspects, personal talents and attitudes must also be considered: like / dislike honey, like / dislike Latin, etc., and explaining that behaviours and the beliefs that unite a group represent the culture of that group. Explain that there can be differences in behaviour even within the same culture.*

**Read**

*Although each person might think they know their country well, there are different ways of seeing or doing the same thing. With this in mind, each person may discover that there are different ways of doing the same things and that what is 'normal' for a person may not be so for someone else.. Therefore, skills must be developed to define the concept of culture and to acquire a deeper knowledge of culture by broadening the knowledge and acceptance of one's own and "otherness."*

*The aim is to be strongly aware of one's culture and one's own to be a good mentor.*

**TOPIC 3 – “THE INTERVIEW WITHOUT WORDS”**

*Will this topic be adapted to capsule: yes*

*Which format would you like to suggest: video interview*

**Topic description:**

The interview without words is an activity which focuses on mediation processes through which stereotypes can be broken down. It reflects on identity, ethnocentrism, the relativity of the point of view and non-verbal communication.

**Read**

When it comes to intercultural dialogue, it is important to reflect on the concept of stereotype and the concept linked to the first impressions you have when you meet someone, acquiring the value of cultural and social mediation. We must go to the bottom of each person's beliefs when we talk about a culture that is "different" from one's own, understanding all the variables that come into play.

**TOPIC 4 – WHY IS TOLERANCE ALONE NOT ENOUGH?**

*Will this topic be adapted to capsule: no*

*Which format would you like to suggest: PowerPoint presentation*

**Topic description:**

The activity “Why tolerance is not enough?” aims to address the issue of personal and social development that leads to multiculturalism and to the interculturality of the social community. This activity also encourages each person to understand that tolerance alone is not enough for the development of intercultural dialogue.

**Read**

*For the development of intercultural dialogue, tolerance alone is not enough; Familiarity, cooperation, working with people from different linguistic background, different religious background, and different ethnic groups are required to learn the ability to know how to communicate and to use verbal and non-verbal communication to control one's own gestures and to be more accessible and opened to others. The development of such soft skills would enable each person to count knowing how to accept tolerance, confronting prejudices, and working on overcoming them. The main goal is to develop an intercultural dialogue and to acquire intercultural competencies.*

**TOPIC 5 – PERCEPTION OF THE OTHER**

*Will this topic be adapted to capsule: no*

*Which format would you like to suggest: PowerPoint presentation*

**Topic description:**

Perception of the other is an activity which focuses on recognizing the other as a subject from a different country. This activity requires a capacity for acceptance and mediation in customs and relational modalities. It aims to clarify that many

times the perception of things is linked to the education received and the culture in which we were born and lived.

**Read**

*This activity intends to develop the ability to recognise the other as a subject coming from a different country and requiring a capacity for acceptance and mediation in customs and relational modalities. It is necessary to work on acquiring awareness to eradicate the stereotypes and prejudices that are often built around "the other." It is important to encourage the ability to know how to step into the shoes of others and to know their culture, history.*