

Dare Conference: Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Vienna, Nov 14-16, 2008  
Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

## Intercultural competences in Adult Education: Assessment criteria and Models





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<http://bettina.strewe.de>

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Dare Conference: Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Vienna, Nov 14-16, 2008  
Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

## Questions

- Who is working constantly with foreign cultures?
- Who is engaged in teaching/ training people from diverse cultures?
- Who has already lived in a foreign country?
- Who has already knowledge in Intercultural affairs?
- Who has already experienced a critical incident?
- Who has grown up in a bicultural family?
- Who has already attended a workshop on intercultural topics?

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Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

## Learning levels

### Levels of learning

Sensibilization for intercultural factors in intercultural cooperation in 3 levels/layers:

- **Cognition - ratio - knowledge** (what do I know - facts, findings; what should I know?)
- **Emotion - affect** (realize my feelings about critical incidents and being able to handle them)
- **Operation - acting/reacting** (realize my & others behaviour, assess it and being able to CHANGE my action)

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Dare Conference: Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Vienna, Nov 14-16, 2008  
Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

## Proceeding of experiencing or observing a situation without evaluating it straight away

### 3 steps of processing an experienced / observed situation

- 1. Selection**  
impulse to adjust things to your category system  
intending to integrate foreign elements in your value system.  
tending to select those elements of a scenario that one knows already  
This process can be conscious or not.
- 2. Interpretation**  
interpret the behavior or setting that you were confronted with according to your standards.  
making a positive arrangement, the interpretation will be harmonious.  
However, if the impression was strange or if you experienced it as stressful, the interpretation will be more negative.
- 3. Evaluation**  
settling and adjustment of the own interpretation in a systematic way.  
However, the more categories you know the better you can differentiate the behavior or attitude of another person. If your interpretation and evaluation does not fit into the other cultural system, -> permanent trouble because of drawing the "wrong" conclusions.



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Dare Conference: Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Vienna, Nov 14-16, 2008  
Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models


## Observation - Interpretation

What do you see on this picture?  
What do you think is shown on the picture? What did the painter want to tell us?

**THE CORE OF INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS IS LEARNING TO SEPARATE OBSERVATION FROM INTERPRETATION.**

**POSTPONE INTERPRETATION UNTIL YOU KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT THE OTHER CULTURE.**

Gert Jan Hofstede et al., Exploring Culture... Yarmouth 2002, p. 11



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Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

### Criteria in language

Observation	Interpretation
Neutral terms	Judging terms
No judging adjectives	Judging adjectives
Neutral tone	Emotional tone
Statements	Exaggerations
Facts	Meanings
?	!
...	...

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Dare Conference: Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Vienna, Nov 14-16, 2008  
Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

### Process of sensitivity

#### Model of three steps of cultural learning

- Cultural awareness of cultural differences.** The differences between the own and the foreign culture are recognized as **factors** of culture, not as a deficit or a mistake of a person or group of persons. The person becomes aware of other ways of thinking and acting.
- Learning to see the own and foreign standards as different ways of life.** Becoming aware of the **relativity** of the own and others standards. The own as well as the other point of view are a **construct of reality**. Both products of the constructs are functioning in their contexts. This step of sensitivity allows to open up to other cultures.
- Recognition of the construction of the own identity.** Process of self-reflection that aims into a **consciousness** on culture categories and factors of culture in the own and the foreign culture. At that point the person is free to reflect on the own identity without losing it. The individual will **accept cultural diversity** as something normal and he or she is able to adapt to another culture.

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Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

### Cultural Learning

**If a person reaches the third step of cultural learning, he or she can handle intercultural situations by analyzing them and learning to improve intercultural understanding.**

Milton Bennett (1993)

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Dare Conference: Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Vienna, Nov 14-16, 2008  
Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

### Loyalty and Rules

**The Car and the Pedestrian**

You are riding in a car driven by a close friend. He hits a pedestrian. You know he was going at least 35 miles per hour in an area of the city where the maximum allowed speed is 20 miles per hour. There are no witnesses. His lawyer says that if you testify under oath that he was only driving 20 miles per hour it may save him from serious consequences.

What right has your friend to expect you to protect him?

No right                      some right                      definite right

What do you think you would do in view of the obligations of a sworn witness and the obligation to your friend?

Not testify                      that he was going 20 m an hour                      Testify

Trompenaars / Hampden-Turner 1997, p. 33f.

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Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

### Cultural Learning

When a situation of confrontation or conflict has tried to be analyzed by questions like:

- ✓ What has happened?
- ✓ What was the talk/setting/behavior/reaction that I did not understand?
- ✓ When was the point we talked at cross-purposes?
- ✓ What was the talk/setting/behavior/reaction I could not identify with?
- ✓ At what point did I start to feel uneasy?
- ✓ At what point of time did I lose control over the situation?
- ✓ ...

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Dare Conference: Intercultural Dialogue – Challenge for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Vienna, Nov 14-16, 2008  
Workshop: Intercultural competences in adult education: assessment criteria and models

### Summary

**Assessment criteria:**

- ✓ Consciousness?
- ✓ Cognition - emotion - operation?
- ✓ Observation/selection - interpretation - evaluation?

**Tools:**

- ✓ Phrasing/wording?
- ✓ Form of analysis: Questioning?
- ✓ Emphasis

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