

Bridging the Gap - communicating appropriately and effectively in a culturally diverse campus



Orientation Workshop by KUL & LSC

2008

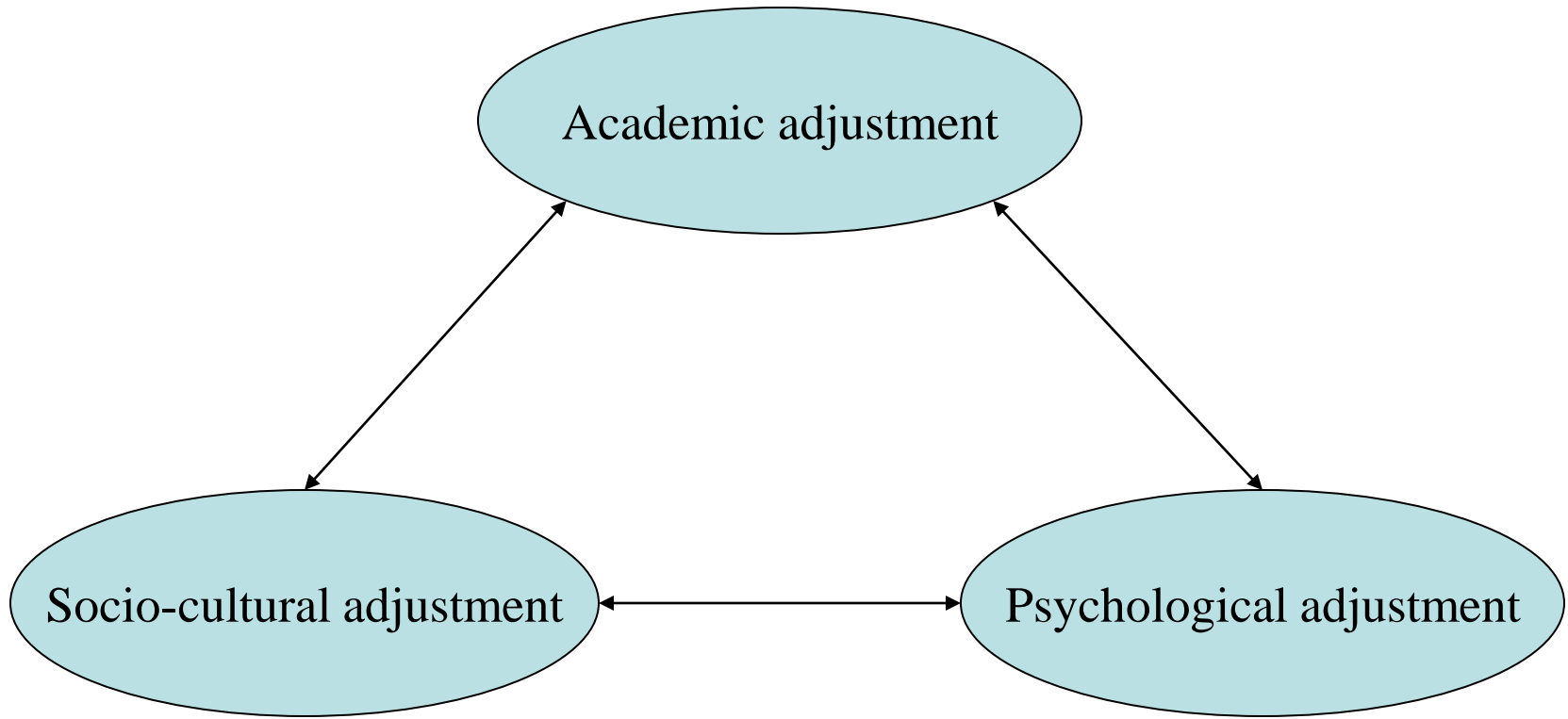
Trainers: Miao Zhao & Lutgart Duser

Introduction

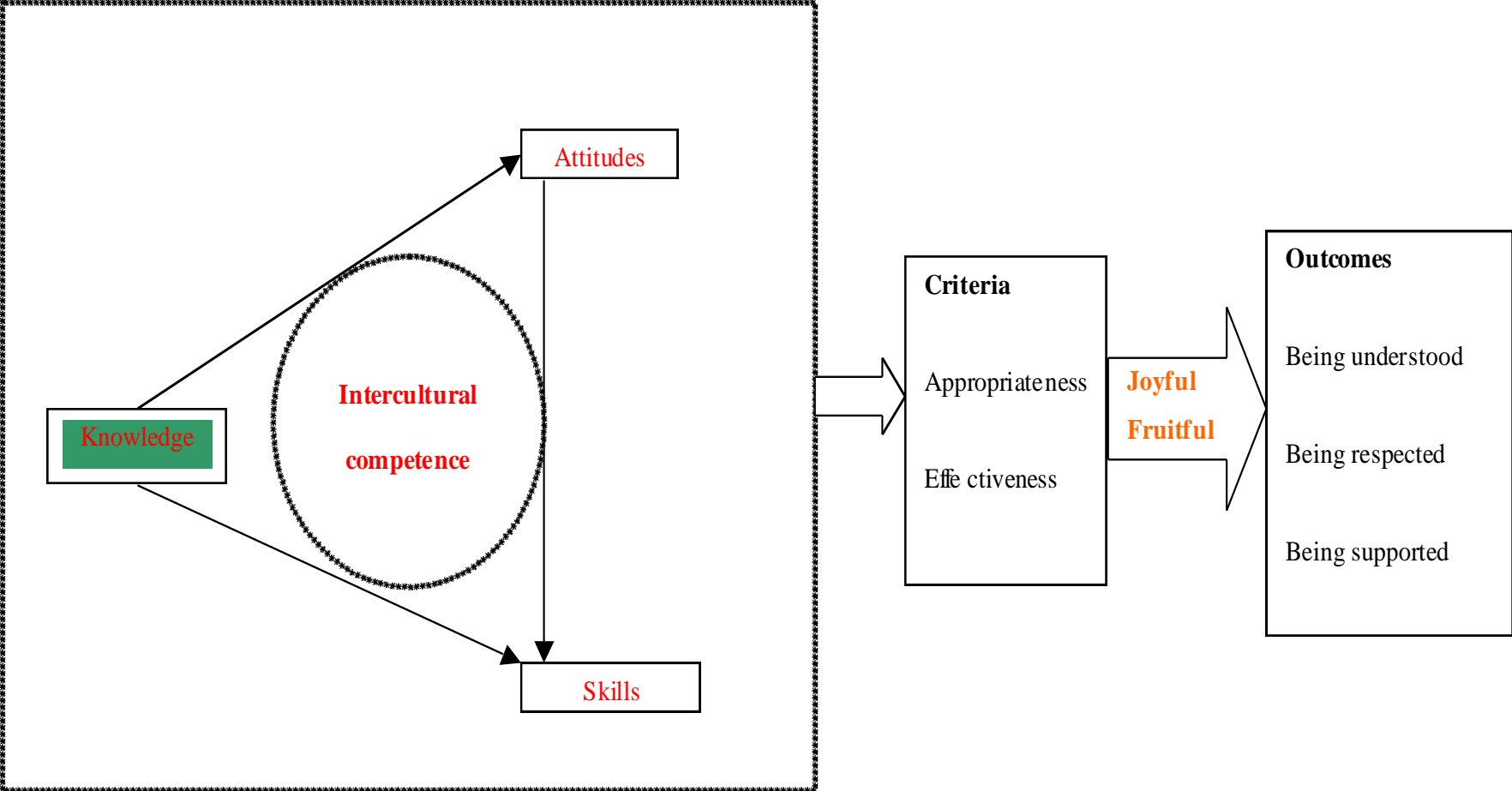
- Who are we?
 - Lutgart Duser: project manager, Livingstone Centre of Competence for Intercultural Entrepreneurship; coordinating the intercultural training packages 'China-Belgium: Communicating Across Cultures' sponsored by the Flemish government
 - Miao Zhao: Ph.D candidate, Centre of Research on Lifelong Learning and Participation, KULeuven; research project 'Intercultural Practices in European Universities: insights from the university of Leuven'

- Why are we here today?
 - Being mindful of the impact of culture on our thinking and behaving;
 - Being able to act appropriately and effectively in cross-culture encounters;
 - Making our life of living and studying in Leuven joyful and fruitful.

- Being an international student, we need to prepare for:

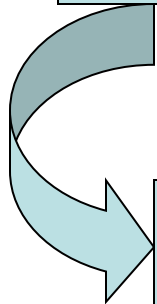


Intercultural competence training framework



- What are we going to talk about today?

- Identity & culture
- Value orientations, e.g. collectivism vs. individualism
- Verbal communication styles
- Non-verbal communication styles



- Factors that influence an intercultural communication

Who are you?

- Please introduce yourself.

- The meaning of 'identity':

It is basically refers to our reflective views of ourselves - at both the social identity and the personal identity levels.

- Forming groups.

- Our attitudes towards out-group members

Examples:

1) ‘Oh, they are so different. It’s hard to understand each other and cooperate.’

2) ‘No, I don’t think there is any difference between us.’

3) ‘I am tolerant. I know we are from different cultures...But, I don’t like her.’

4) ‘Oh, what the hell are they doing?’

5) Someone was late for the class. Two different responses. ‘This guy is so lazy; look at his eyes, he must be drunk last night.’... ‘Oh poor guy, the bus was not on time again.’

6) ‘Hey Miao, have u eaten dogs? (I heard Chinese like eating dogs)’

Culture

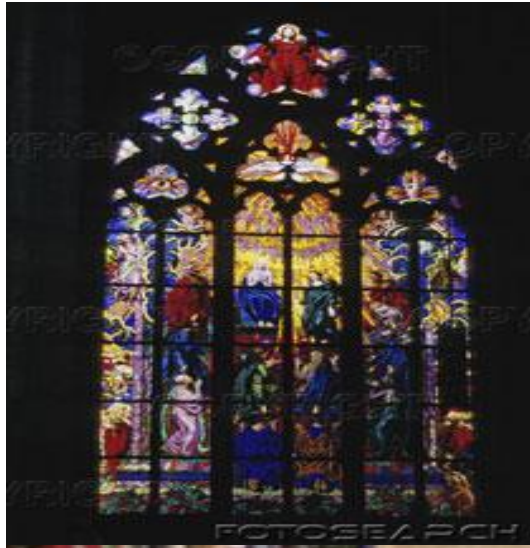
When we talk about Belgium, you will think about ...?



FOTORESEARCH.com

FOTORESEARCH.com

FOTORESEARCH.com



Value orientations

- Case-based discussion
- **Collectivism vs. Individualism**
- Question:

You have two hours to prepare for an examination for one class and an oral report that you and several fellow students will present in another class. The exam score is your own; the oral report earns a group grade. Both are worth 50% of your grade. In the two hours, you can only do one well. What should you do?

Verbal Communication Styles

- **High/ Low context communication**

Dialogue:

H: *I am going to move to my new apartment this weekend.*

L: *Cool. Where is it?*

H: *In Heverlee, close to where you live now.*

(I hope he can help me to move with his car)

L: *Nice. Then I will see you more often.*

(If she wants my help, she will ask)

H: (If he had wanted to give me a ride, he would have offered it.

I'd better ask somebody else)

Alright then, see you around.

- Direct vs. Indirect

Hey! Hey! You! You!

I don't like your girlfriend!

No way! No way!

I think you need a new one

Hey! Hey! You! You!

I could be your girlfriend

- Avril Lavigne 'girlfriend'

You asked how much I love you

I love you a bit

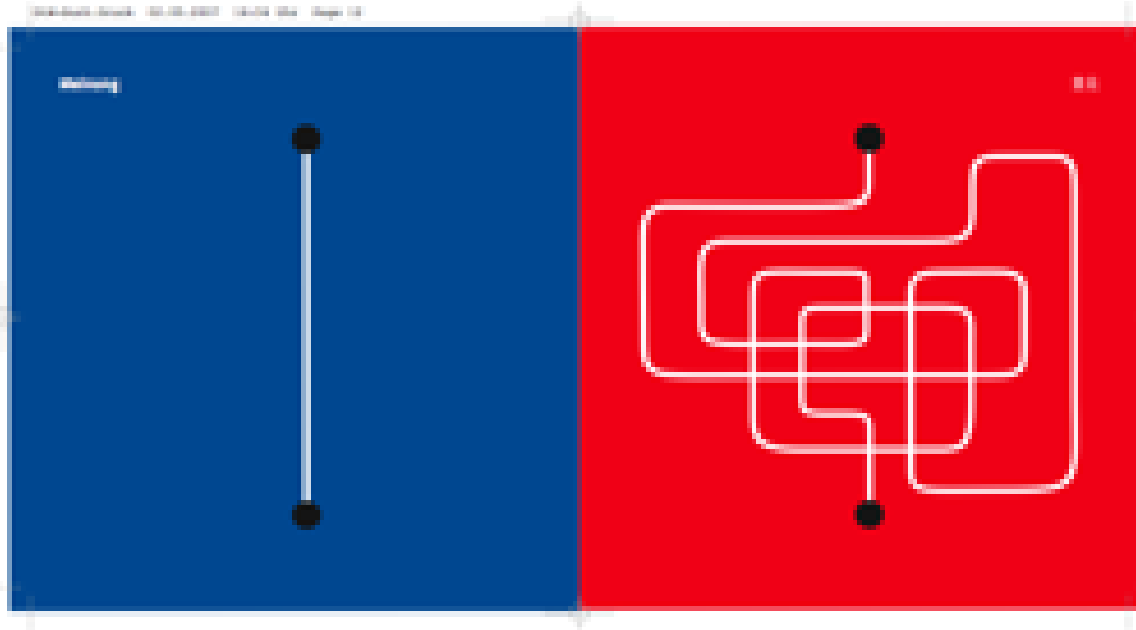
My feeling is true

My love is true

The moon represents my heart...

- Deng Lijun 'the moon represents my heart'

- Spiral vs. Linear logic



- Formal vs. Informal

How do you usually greet the following people in your everyday life? Do you address them by their first names or their titles plus last names?

- Your teachers
- Your parents' close friends
- Your close friends' parents
- Job interviewers
- Your neighbors
- Restaurant servers
- Siblings or cousins

- Self-effacing vs. Self-enhancing

In many Asian cultures, self-effacement talk is expected to signal modesty or humility.

E.g. When offering a gift or a meal, verbal self-deprecation is expected. There are set expressions for verbal humility such as ‘it’s not very tasty’ and ‘it’s nothing special’. The hostess who apologizes to her guests that ‘there is nothing special to offer you’ has probably spent two days planning and preparing the meal. Of course the guests should protest such a disclaimer and reemphasize her or his gratitude.

- Question:
 - How to show your ‘disagreement’ or ‘negative comments’ in a diplomatic way?
 - How to establish intimate friendship?
(self-disclosure strategies during the conversation)

Non-verbal communication styles

- Discussion: thinking about your everyday life in Belgium, have you experienced any moment of feeling embarrassed ?

- Space regulation, etiquette & haptic



- Time regulation: Monochronic/ Polychronic time tendencies

Questions:

- 1) What is the time regulation in general you've experienced in Belgium?
- 2) What is your preferred way of travelling?

- Facial expressions & gestures



Summary

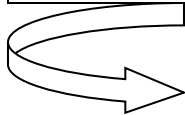
Question:

What are the factors that influence an intercultural communication?

- 1) Language capacity
- 2) Perceived physical attractiveness
- 3) Situational contact conditions
- 4) Individual personal attributes, e.g.

- Personality

- Attitudes towards cultural differences: recognition without judgment;
- Self-disclosure: perceived similarities
- Mindful listening/ observing, reframing & face management



Cross-cultural sensitivity & empathy

- Behavioural flexibility

Wishing you a joyful & fruitful life in Leuven



Living Stone Centre
for Intercultural Entrepreneurship
www.lscoop.com

