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 Greece

Contents

Training material for the development
of intercultural skills by parents

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 is the best way to deal with the increasing cultural diversity within European societies. 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

For example: You see a Muslim woman wearing a head-cover (hijab). What is the tip of the cultural iceberg and what is its unseen mass?

Social context includes also family, education, the neighbourhood and socialisation practices. Stop for a moment and think what makes you different from other people just because of your family. It's a lot, isn't it?

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.
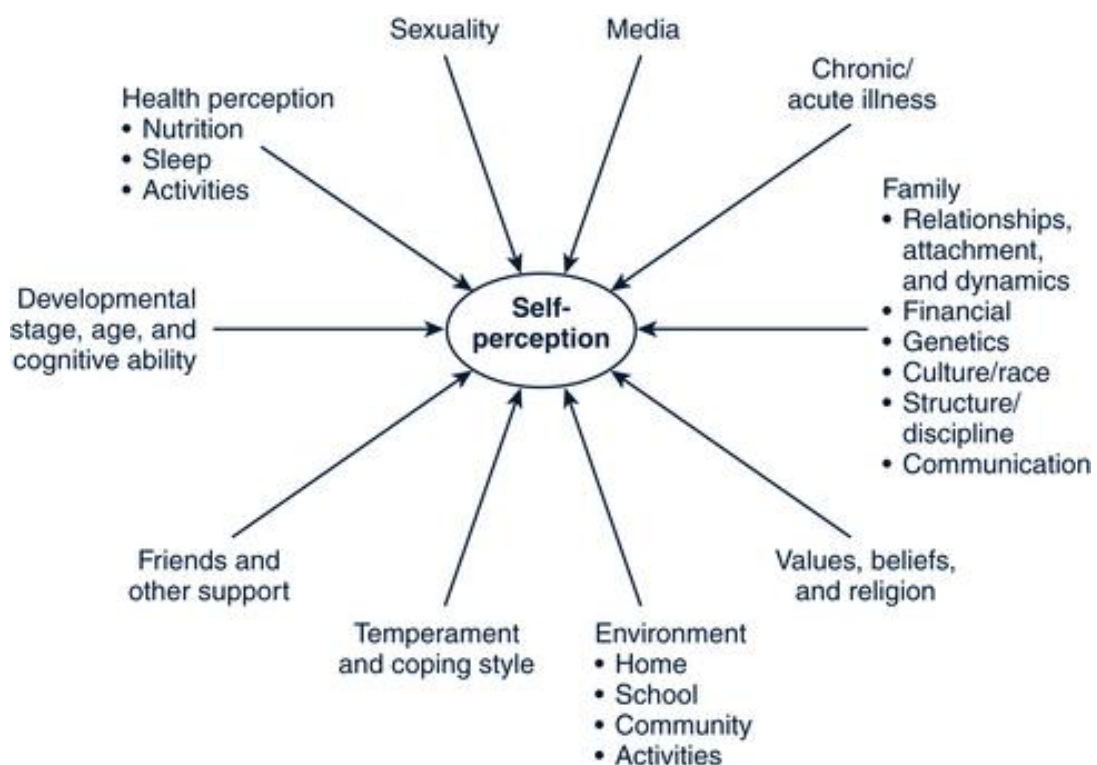
The two main components of self-concept are self-image (how we see ourselves) and self-esteem (the extent to which we value ourselves).

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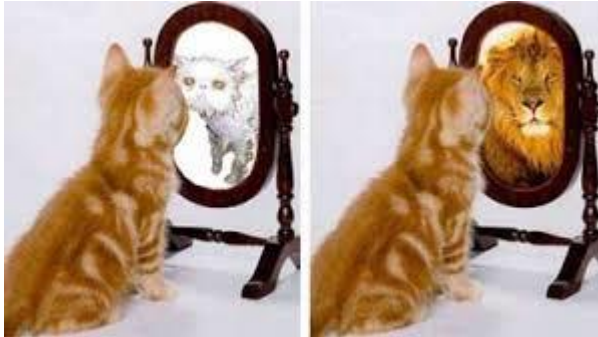
Now think about the following:

- 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.).
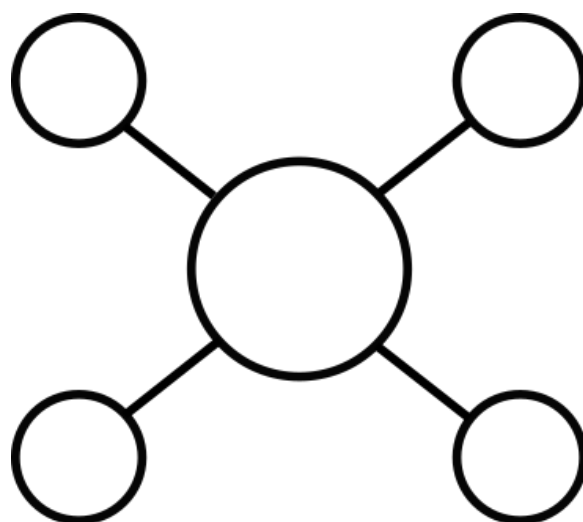
Then ask yourself these questions:

- 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?
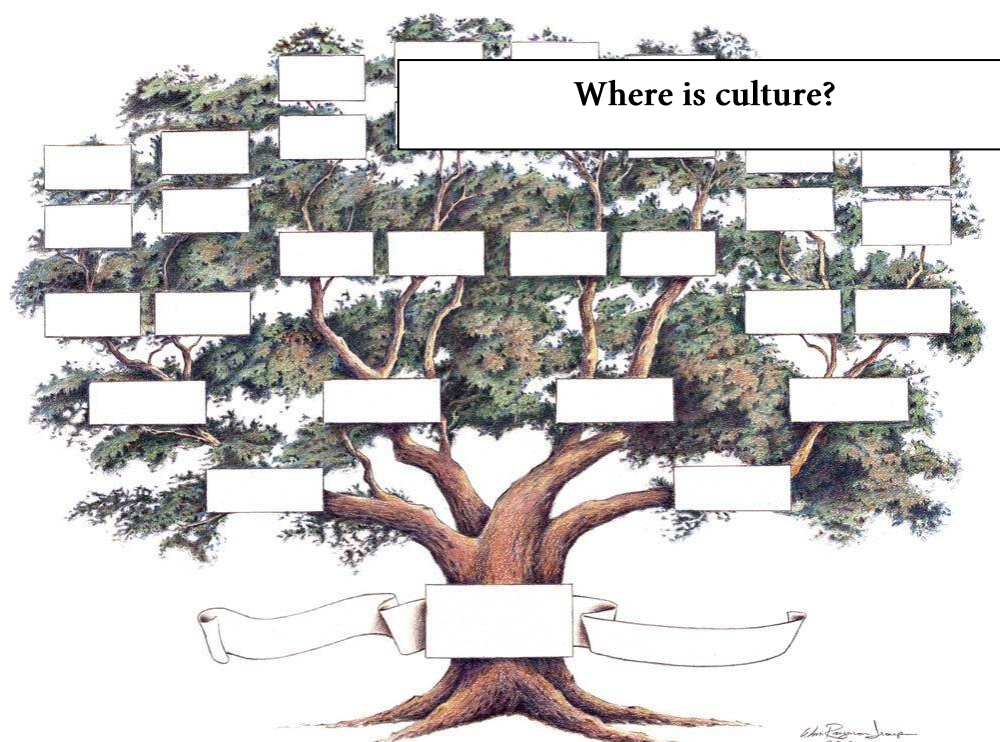
Social perception

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.

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 people 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 (PsycoloGenie.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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                                                    ┌──────────────┐
                                                    │  Self-concept │
                                  ┌──────────────────┤              │      ┌──────────────────┐
                  ┌─────────────────┐ │  Self-perception and │  Self-esteem  │  VALUES
                  │                 │ │  self-awareness       │              │  /BELIEFS
┌──────────────────┐│                 │ └──────────────────┘  Self-image   └──────────────────┘
│ Perception of the │├─┤  Social perception │
│ self and the other │
└──────────────────┘│
                  │ Stereotypes and
                  │ prejudices
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Perception of the self and the other	Self-perception and self-awareness	Self-concept
		Self-esteem
	Social perception	Self-image
	Stereotypes and prejudices	

VALUES /BELIEFS

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT
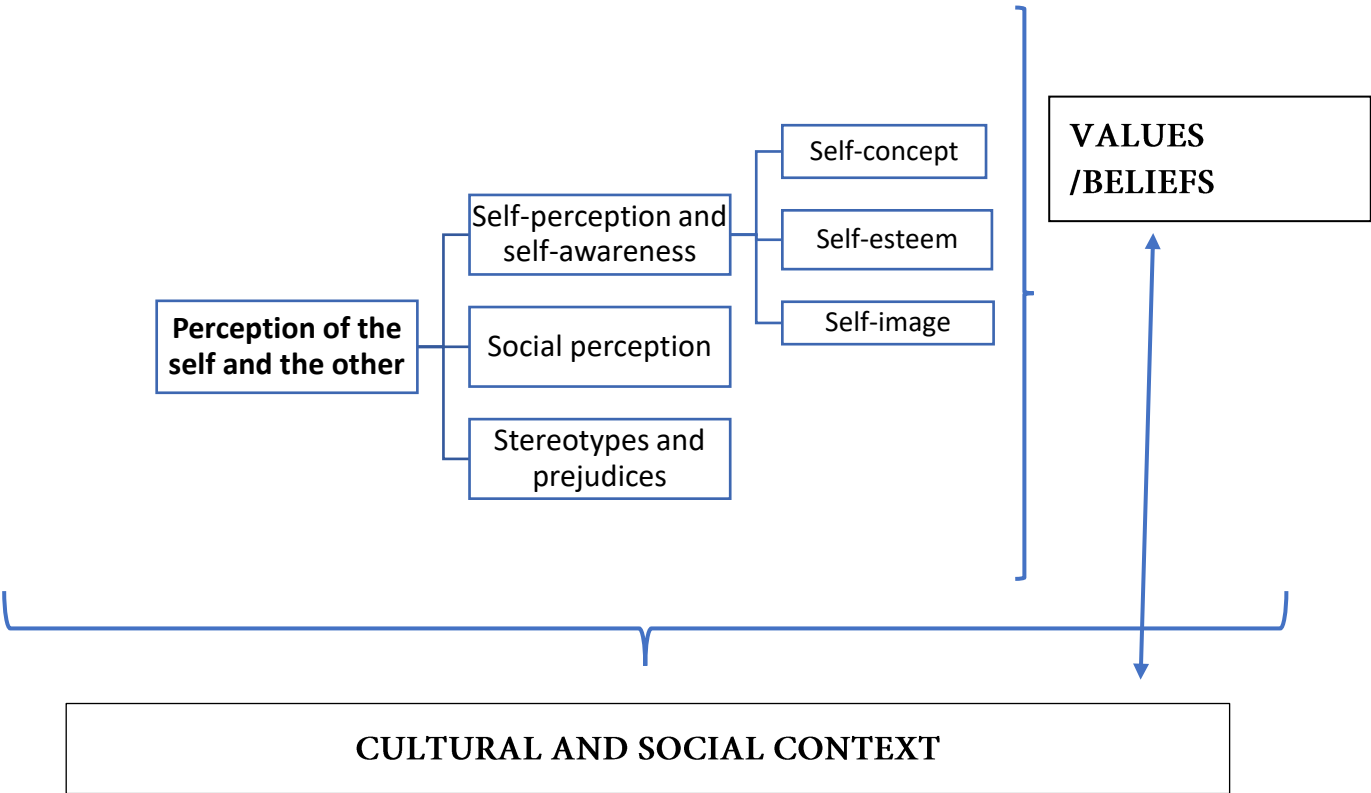
Suggested group activities

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.**

   1   2   3   4   5

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

   1   2   3   4   5

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		1.	Frustration and resentment
		2.	More positive interpretation of the behaviour of parents of the same origin
b. Behaviour		3.	No interaction with parents from different backgrounds
		4.	Lower achievement
c. Reactions of the other group		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

    Click here to access the answer sheet.

CHAPTER 2: CORE VALUES OF THE GREEK SOCIETY

What will I learn?

Main facts and events that have shaped Greek history and culture

Core values, religious customs, taboos, and courtesy rules of the Greek society

Values related to education and family 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 truer when moving to a new country, especially when relocating with the whole family.

We commend you, as a migrant or refugee parent, for taking interest and educating yourself about your new host country, Greece. 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 you need to learn about it, have an open mind, and practice tolerance and understanding.

Milestones in the history of Greece shaping its national identity

Main facts about Greece (or Hellas)

Population: ~10.815.197 according to the 2011 census

Area: 131 957 sq. m.

Population density: 82 inhabitants / sq. m.

Altitude: The highest point of Greece is Mount Olympus with 2.918 m

Bordering countries: Albania, Republic of Northern Macedonia and Bulgaria to the north, Turkey to the east

Natural borders: Aegean Sea (east), Ionian Sea (west), Libyan Sea (south)

Coastline: 14.800 km

Ethnicities: Greeks 93%, other (foreign citizens) 7%

Religions: Christian Orthodox 90%, atheists 4%, other Christians, 3%, Muslims 2%, other religions including Catholics 1%

Native languages: Greek (official) 95,6%, Turkish 2,4%, Slavic 0,8%, Albanian 0,3%, Aromanian 0,5%, Armenian 0,1%, other 0,7%

Languages spoken: Greek (official) 99,5%, Albanian, Armenian, Aromanian, Bulgarian, Turkish, Russian

National holidays: January 1st; January 6th; March 25th; Easter Sunday and Monday; May 1st; August 15th; October 28th; December 25th and 26th;

There are also some holidays that are movable, such as "Kathara Deftera" (Clean Monday), which is celebrated 48 days before Easter Sunday, and "Holy Spirit Day", which is a holiday for specific professions that involve mainly intellectual work.

Greek history

Greece has a long and rich history that spans over thousands of years. Greece is known worldwide as the cradle of western civilization because of its influence on arts, science, politics and the way of thinking. Concepts such as democracy and philosophy, and activities such as theatre plays and the Olympic Games were first introduced by the ancient Greeks.

Historians divide Greek history in 5 different eras:

a) Prehistory, which includes the Stone Age (350000-3200 BCE) and the Bronze Age (3200-1050 BCE).
b) Antiquity (1125 BCE - 330 CE), which includes the Geometric, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, and Roman periods.
c) The Byzantine Empire (330-1453 CE), which includes the early, middle and late Byzantine periods.
d) The Ottoman Period (1453-1829 CE).
e) Modern (1829 CE - today), which includes the formation and expansion of the Hellenic State, interwar and World War II period, and contemporary Greece.

Greece's long history includes numerous battles, invasions, revolutions, discoveries, inventions, periods of great intellectual prosperity as well as dark ages and periods of decline. Some milestones in Greek history are:

− **The first Olympic Games** in 776 BCE.

- The **Greco-Persian wars** (490-479 BCE). The city-states of Central and Southern Greece joined forces to repel the Persian invasion. Besides fighting some of the most legendary battles in history, the victory of the Greeks had a long-term impact on the development of the western civilization as we know it.
- The **conquests of Alexander the Great** (336-323 BCE) and the subsequent creation of the Hellenistic world. Thus the Greek civilisation and language spread to a huge part of the ancient world.
- The **conquest by Rome** (146 BCE). This resulted in the further spread of the Greek civilisation westwards but also in the adoption of Roman administrative and legal structures, some of which exist until today.
- The **creation of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium)** (330-1453 CE). This period was marked by the interplay of Hellenic influence, Roman administration and Christian faith. Greek became the official language of the empire (replacing Latin). The Eastern Orthodox Church exercised a strong influence in all aspects of life and begun to shape from that time on the national identity of the Greeks.
- The **conquest by the Ottomans** in 1453 CE. An almost 400-year period of Ottoman domination begun, which was marked by a decline in the intellectual, artistic and economic life in most parts of Greece.
- The **Independence War** against the Ottoman Empire that started in 1821 (known also as *The Revolution of 1821*), and resulted in the formation of an independent Greek state in 1829.
- The **first Greek constitution** in 1844.
- The **war in Asia Minor** that ended in disaster (1922) and was followed by a huge refugee wave to Greece. This disaster meant the end of the *grand idea* to revive Byzantium. The integration of the many refugees of Greek origin had a long-lasting social, economic, political and cultural impact.

- **World War II** (1940-1945) and the **Civil War** (1946-1949). Both were deeply traumatic events that eventually resulted in Greece siding politically with Western Europe.
- The **restoration of democracy** in 1974 after a 7-year fascist dictatorship.
- The **entrance to the European Economic Community** in 1981.
- Adoption of the euro in 2002.
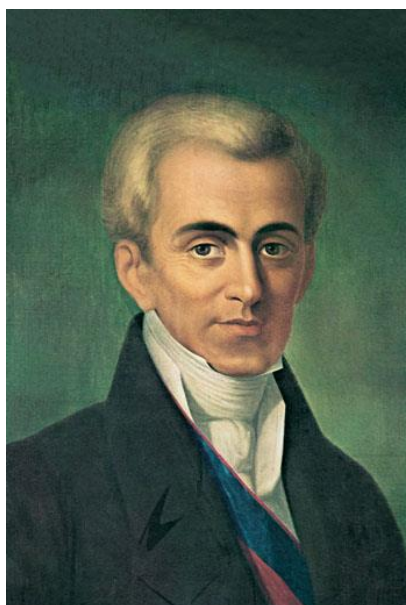
The first Governor of Greece, Ioannis Kapodistrias, 1776-1831

A short introduction to Greece

Some things you didn't know about Greece

- *Think briefly of the milestones in your country's history. Can you find any similarities in history between Greece and your country?*
- *Do you know of any cultural exchanges between your country and Greece over the centuries?*

Learn more about the history of Greece at:

in2Greece

FOUNDATION OF THE HELLENIC WORLD

Key legal principles of the Greek society

Law of Greece

The constitution of the modern Greek state was adopted in 1975 and underwent minor revisions in 1986, 2001, and 2008. The constitution is the fundamental law upon which the whole legislation of Greece is based. There are multiple legal codes for different spheres of law, such as the Civil Code, the Criminal Code, the Labour Code etc.

After Greece joined the European Union (1981) it had to adopt certain EU-wide measures. These are set in the EU treaties (which are applicable directly), EU directives (which must be incorporated into Greek laws to become fully applicable) and EU regulations (applicable directly). If the EU measures conflict with Greek laws typically the EU measures apply.

Greece is a Parliamentary Republic. The President of the Greek Republic is Head of State (but with limited legislative and executive powers), the Prime Minister is Head of Government and there is a multi-party political system.

Greek laws on important issues

Personal and social rights

- **Practicing any religion** and wearing religious clothing is free.
- **Freedom of speech** is respected.
- **Labour strikes** are permitted.

– **Motherhood** is protected by the law. In case of divorce, custody of children is usually given to the mother, except from very specific circumstances.

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

– **Everyone** has the right to education, labour, health, social welfare and housing. There are social welfare provisions for people with very low income and the unemployed.

– **Free, taxpayer-funded education** is available to all residents of Greece (Greek citizens and foreigners alike). The attendance of public universities is for free.

Drugs, alcohol, and food

– **Recreational drugs** are illegal (and this is enforced).

– **Alcohol** is legal. The minimum legal age of purchase is 17.

– **Cigarettes** are legal. The minimum legal age of purchase is 18.

– **Smoking** is banned in public building interiors (including restaurants and cafes), waiting rooms, private business interiors, and public transport.

– **Pork** is legal.

Sexual and marriage matters

– **Prostitution** is not prosecuted under certain conditions. Policy supervision is in place to combat illegal prostitution, human trafficking and sexual services by minors.

– **Pornography** is not prosecuted, with the exception of child pornography.

– **Homosexual relations** are legal.

– **Age of consent** is 14 (any sex under that is statutory rape), but 16 if the partner is over 18.

- **Marriage** is between a single husband and a single wife, both at least 18 years old (but this age may be lowered to 16 by a court of law). Polygamy is not legal.
- **Domestic violence** is a crime and is prosecuted by the law since 2006.
- **Divorce** is allowed. Both men and women can equally ask for it.

Guns and national defence

- **Guns** are legal to own only with a medical certificate that the person has no mental problems and with permission by the Police. A permission is required even for hunting guns. It is prohibited to carry guns and other weapons in public places and areas. All kinds of weapons have to be registered with the Police.
- **Joining the army is mandatory for all male citizens in Greece.** However there is the provision of social service for conscientious objectors.

Gambling

- **Gambling** is legal although the types permitted are limited.
- **Legal age for gambling** is 21.
- **Lotteries** are legal but have charity obligations.

Killing and punishments

- **Abortion** is allowed under certain conditions and until a certain age of the foetus.
- **Euthanasia** is illegal.
- **Death penalty** is not practiced.
- **Torturing** is banned.
- **Corporal punishment of children** is banned.

Political rights

–   **Voting:** Voting is mandatory for Greek citizens (as soon as they turn 18) but there is no significant punishment if someone does not participate in it.

–   **Minimum age to be elected:** 21 for municipality councils, 25 for Parliament, 40-80 to be elected as President. There are no gender, ethnic, religious, property or other requirements.

Citizenship

–   **Citizenship** is acquired if at least one parent is a Greek citizen, if a child of foreigners is born in Greek territory and they have not declared a different nationality, or by naturalization (10 years of legal residence and a language/culture exam).

–   **Dual citizenship** is permitted.

Traffic rules

–   Unless differently stated, **speed limits** are 50 km/h (in inhabited areas), 90 km/h (most roads), 110 km/h (lower class motorways), and 130 km/h (upper class motorways).

–   **Maximum alcohol quotient** is 0,04% for car drivers, 0% for bus, truck, motorcycle drivers and those having a license for under 2 years.

–   **A driver's license** may be acquired at 18 for most cars (16 for small motorcycles, 20-24 for various buses and trucks). The license has to be renewed after a certain age.

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- Which laws from the above mentioned are different and which ones are similar in your country?

- Are any of the laws described above against your culture?

- Are traffic rules and speed limits strictly reinforced in your country?

To learn about migration policy and residence permits, check the website of the *Greek Ministry of Migration Policy*.

In the following websites you can find organisations and initiatives that provide legal services to migrants and refugees:
LearnAboutGreece.gr
Athens Coordination Center for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR)

Greek society's perception of family life

The Greek society

Being on the crossroads of East and West and having such a rich historic heritage, Greece has always been exposed to very diverse cultural, political and philosophical influences. For many years a slogan reflecting the prevalent values was "homeland – religion – family", emphasising how connected these three were thought to be.

During the past decades the Greek society is changing a lot, affected by globalisation, the internet, changing moral values and disappointment from highly esteemed institutions. Family is the most trusted element of the society for the vast majority of Greeks, as recent studies reveal. When the economic crisis occurred (2009-2018), there was a shift towards traditions, family bonding, solidarity and volunteering.

Generally speaking, Greek people are outgoing and open to the other. Being in company with others (having "parea") is very much desired. Greeks are passionate when discussing with others, speaking loudly and gesturing a lot. They usually show their best side to their friends.

Greek families and personal relations

As mentioned before, family is very important to the Greeks. Family does not mean only parents and siblings, but it includes grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and all relatives in general. Having a good family (mate and children) is considered key to happiness. Most couples have one or two children.

Usually the core of the family (parents and children) lives together in an apartment or private house. It is preferred to live nearby the grandparents, since these play a significant role in the upbringing of their grandchildren. This is especially the case when both parents are working. It is also common for grandparents to move in to live with their children because

they are unable to take care of themselves. In Greek families is natural for children to live with parents, even when they are adults. It is normal for parents to support their children regardless of their age. This support is often extended to all relatives in need.

With regard to gender roles, the society is still patriarchal in a sense that males have still the leading role and are considered as the providers of the family. However this is changing through the years, as most Greek women today receive a high level of education and work to contribute to the household income. Nevertheless, women are still expected to be responsible for the majority of household duties and the upbringing of children.

Marriage remains the official act for a couple to be recognised as a family. In Greece there are two types of marriage: the political – which is held in the town hall conducted by the Mayor, and the religious – which is the traditional one held in a church conducted by a priest. Although the religious marriage is recognised by the state, the opposite is not the case.

Another legal act for the recognition of a couple (of different sexes) is the "cohabitation agreement". It provides the couple with almost the same benefits as the legal act of marriage, even though its social status is not the same. The cohabitation agreement is signed in the presence of a notary and is filed with the registrar.

Like in all European countries, there is also a trend for couples to live together without being married, which is now socially acceptable. As a result, nowadays people are getting married at an older age than in the previous decades. For example, the average marriage age for women back in the 50's was 24 and for men 28, while now it is 30 for women and for men is even higher (33) (ESYE, nd). Children usually receive their father's last name, but parents have also the option to choose for their children to

have both last names (the father's and the mother's) by signing an agreement before the wedding.

When it comes to personal relationships, Greeks are very intimate. Men and women alike exchange kisses on the cheeks or they hug with their friends, relatives or even acquaintances. Handshakes are mainly for formal occasions or for strangers. Greek people also date a lot and flirting or being in a relationship isn't a taboo in the Greek society.

Of course, in small villages and rural areas people are more connected to traditions and ethics. Engagement before marriage is important for the reputation of a woman. Strangers are not easily integrated in the local community. On the other hand, hospitality is more pronounced there than in the big cities.

Greek values and daily life

Health is generally considered to be one of the most precious goods. This is reflected in popular sayings ("health is above everything") and in everyday greetings. Both *hello* and *goodbye* in Greek are *Yia sas*, which literally means "be healthy". Even the wishes given when someone drinks or eats a treat and the toasts are related to health, meaning "to our/your health". Nevertheless, this appreciation for good health does not lead necessarily to a healthier lifestyle.

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

> **Did you know?**
>
> *A highly valued virtue in Greece is "filotimo". It literally means "love for honour" and it includes several dimensions. Filotimo has the sense of dignity and preserving the personal honour. It involves working diligently to do one's best or offering one's best without caring about effort or cost. The true reward are the words of praise, recognition and the good reputation one wins. Saying about somebody they have no filotimo is very negative.*

- having a permanent job, preferably in Public Service
- settling financial obligations on time (e.g. pay the bills, the rent, children's foreign language classes etc.)
- owning a home (and if possible, a second one in the countryside)
- having a prestigious job
- having a good wage
- knowing and trusting an employee can be more important to the employer than qualifications for the job

As to the daily routine, here are some main characteristics:

- Most Greeks work from 9:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday. This schedule is for people working in offices, in banks and the public sector. People working in shops and other commercial stores may work from Monday to Saturday with a day off within the week, having a rolling schedule. Public servants have the option to choose their schedule (e.g. 07.00-15.00, 08.00-16.00, 09.00-17.00) according to their needs and the needs/ requirements of their service.
- Schools start at 8.00 and end between 12.30 and 14.00. Children whose parents are both working may attend extra lessons at schools until 16.00.
- People working in the private sector usually have to work overtime. This is not the case for public servants.
- Between 15.00 and 17.30 one should keep quiet when at home. Visits, phone calls and noise are completely inappropriate at this time and the police may be called if these "quiet hours" are not respected.
- Lots of people have an extra part-time job in order to increase their income.
- Depending on their schedule, people are usually back at home between 16.00 and 18.00.

– Dinner is usually prepared by the wife, and repairs around the house are expected to be done by the husband.

– After school children have many extra activities such as English lessons, computer lessons, sports, arts or music lessons. All these activities are at the family's expenses.

– In the afternoon children are expected to do their homework.

– In the evenings during the week the family watches TV, discusses about daily issues or they surf in the internet. People usually stay up late (23.00-00.00).

– Weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) are free for most workers and students.

– Greeks love to go out to drink a coffee or ouzo with friends, have lunch or dinner in a traditional tavern or entertain themselves. Friday, Saturday and Sunday night most people go out and enjoy themselves. This trend didn't change even during the ongoing economic crisis (2009-2018)!

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

Learn About Greece

A multilingual guide about Greece in Albanian, Arabic, English, French, Greek, Kiswahili, Punjabi, Russian and Urdu.

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

In Greece, education is considered to be one of the basic goods that anyone should have access to. Therefore, primary to tertiary education is public and it is for free. Of course there are also private institutions addressed to parents who want a better educational concept for their children. Literacy rates are 97.7% for the overall population.

Good education is highly valued by the Greek society; so, many children continue their studies after completing secondary education. This is not necessarily connected to expectations to find a better job. Statistics show clearly that many university graduates are unemployed (since 2006, the employment rate of graduates has dropped by 20%. As of 2015, only 49.9% percent of recent graduates were employed, as opposed to the average of 81.9% in the EU.). Often

University degrees are highly esteemed.

young people follow a prestigious university course, such as medicine, law, or philology, even though they are aware that the labour market asks for different qualifications. This may seem strange, but it is often related to the expectations of parents and to the low value attributed to technical education. For many years there has been a distorted perception of technical jobs, considering that such jobs were only for less intelligent and capable people. Gradually this attitude is changing, especially among the younger generation, given the big demand in the labour market for technical skills and the improvement of technical education. Nevertheless,

university studies are still viewed by many as a way of personal cultivation and improvement, as well as a proof of success, regardless of employment prospects.

As in most western societies, the notion of success is closely related to the type of job people have and the money they earn. Popularity is also viewed as an important indicator of success. So, the ideal combination would be to be well educated, have a prestigious job, make a lot of money and be well-known, at least in the local community. Of course, the values related to success may vary greatly among Greek people, depending on their mentality and overall view of things. In recent years, for example, for many people it has become more important to follow their dreams than to make money or become famous.

Given the high esteem education enjoys, it is no wonder that educators of all levels enjoy respect and recognition. However, this is not related to any special authority in the classrooms or over the life of the pupils/students. Contrary to the past, nowadays teachers in Greece have to cope with shrinking discipline. The corporal punishment of students of any age is strictly prohibited. So teachers are required to inspire rather than to request the respect and collaboration of their students.

> – *How do the values related to education differ in your country?*
> – *Do you believe that there is an advantage if more young people in a country get university education? Why? Why not?*
> – *How is success defined in your country? What are the main differences compared to Greece?*

An introduction to the Greek education system

Frequently Asked Questions that migrants may have about the Greek education system, produced by the Ministry of Education.

Hospitality and courtesy rules in the Greek society

Hospitality

Greeks are mostly known for their hospitality. Wherever you are in Greece, people will welcome you and they will be eager to offer their help. Offering a treat to a stranger is very common. Of course, in big cities where the criminality rates are higher it is normal for people to be more distant and cautious. However, in a case of emergency or if you just need information or directions someone will provide you with assistance.

Hospitality means a lot to the Greek people. If you are visiting rural areas or living there where the rhythms of life are looser and people are simpler then it is for sure that you will enjoy the so-called "Greek hospitality". Unknown people will invite you to their houses, they will prepare dinner for you and if it is too late they may insist that you sleep over.

Some tips when you are invited by a Greek:
- You should accept everything you are served as a gesture of politeness
- If you refuse something, then it could be perceived as an insult to the host/hostess (unless there are serious health reasons)
- If you are invited for a coffee don't be surprised if you will be offered more than that (dinner, desert, drinks etc.)

It is good to praise your host's hospitality, it is something they are really proud of.

Meeting and greeting

Most Greeks are outgoing and expressive. Exchanging a warm handshake, a kiss cheek-to-cheek and a hug is something common. Usually, when you meet someone for the first time the handshake would be the most appropriate way of greeting. The handshake is used in all ages and for both sexes (men, women, and children).

Please keep in mind that when you talk to Greeks **you should have a direct eye-contact** with them. This is interpreted as a sign of honesty, sincerity and good intentions.

If the person is older than you, address them by their title (Mr., Mrs., and Ms.) and their last name, unless invited to use their first name. The Greek language has the courtesy plural, i.e. addressing a person in the plural in order to show respect. The courtesy plural is always used with strangers and superiors. Younger people or people of the same age often address each other more informally, even if they don't know each other.

Gift giving etiquette

Greeks are very generous when inviting others or being invited themselves. It is polite to always bring gifts to friends and it is considered quite normal to bring along some sweets, a bottle of wine or a pot of flowers when invited to someone else's home. If you plan to host lunch or dinner, be prepared to receive the finest sweets from every second guest.

Did you know?

Giving a knife or a scissor as a gift is thought to bring bad luck.

Dining etiquette

Eating for Greeks is something like a ceremony. There is no special etiquette, though, and eating only with a fork is not considered impolite.

If you are invited for dinner just follow some simple rules:

- Don't start eating until the host joins the table
- Try to eat everything that is on your plate
- Asking to refill your plate will bring joy to the host

- If alcohol is served, then drink it slowly. You would make a bad impression if you got drunk at dinner.
- You shouldn't leave the table unless everyone has finished their meal
- Be polite and offer the host / hostess to help with cleaning the table. Your offer will most probably not be accepted but it will be appreciated.

Greek people are proud of their cuisine; so, any compliment on your behalf about it and their cooking will be more than welcome!

Business customs

If you arrange a professional meeting with a Greek businessman/ businesswoman, please follow the tips given below:

- First impressions are of high importance: you have to be neat, stylish and professionally dressed.
- You have to be on time: although Greeks are not really famous for their punctuality it would be better for you not to follow their example. If being late is inevitable you have to give a good excuse.
- Exchange business cards after a formal introduction: make sure to take a recognisable moment to examine the content of the card you are given before putting it away.
- You may start a conversation about general social issues: Greeks usually take some time to socialize before they come into the point of the meeting
- Try to be patient during conversation: Greeks usually conduct multiple conversations in the group setting, there might be interruptions etc.
- Don't feel anxious if the conversation heats up: Greeks are passionate speakers and having tension during a meeting is considered to be fruitful for the meetings outcomes.

- Try to be friendly and patient but firm when it comes to negotiations

Building a personal relationship with the potential associate would bring the best results in your business. Greeks often collaborate with people who they trust and therefore they prefer face-to-face contact and verbal communication as means that enhance this relationship. Saying something about your character, your life and your family is usually appreciated.

The following information is also useful when working with Greek people. Generally speaking, Greek people:

- Respect age and hierarchy. The older and more experienced the employee is, the more his/her opinion is taken into account.
- Expect all employees to express their opinion, even those with the lowest statutes.
- Appreciate rational responses and arguments based on reason.
- Appreciate a direct and straightforward approach when it comes to dealing with problems.
- Are flexible, since this element is fundamental in their professional mentality. This flexibility may well apply to deadlines and agreed responsibilities.

Building relationships and communication

As you have seen so far, communication and personal relationships play a pivotal role in Greek culture. Here are some elements one should take into account when communicating with Greek people as they are very much related to the Greek mentality:

- **They use indirect communication** especially when they have to give a negative answer to someone. However, if they know you well they are more likely to provide a direct answer.

- **They have a very "theatrical "communication style** since it includes all means of expression (verbal, gestures, body language and facial expressions, raised voices) indicating their feelings.

- **Interrupting is very common.** It is not meant to be rude; it just shows the active participation of the other person in what is being said. You are not expected to stop what you are saying just because somebody drops in a remark while you are talking!

- **They do not feel comfortable during long periods of silence.** If you receive a silent response during a conversation you may assume that this silence indicates negative feelings or embarrassment about what has been said.

Greek people use non-verbal language excessively when talking with others. If you look closely at a company of Greek people talking you will notice that:

- **They may stay or sit very close to each other**, as they don't have the sense of maintaining a certain distance from other people, especially when they feel comfortable or familiar with somebody

- **They are very tactile** and they seek to have a personal contact when talking to someone (touching one another often in the arm, the back or the leg)

- **They use a lot of gestures** and facial expressions

- They prefer people to look at them **directly in the eyes** when talking with them.

There are also things that you ***should NOT DO*** when speaking with a Greek:

- It is impolite to point out someone with the index finger.

- Never raise your palm open with the 5 fingers stretched towards his/her face. If you want to indicate number 5, your palm should always look towards yourself.

[Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication: Greek Culture](#)

> – *What similarities and what differences have you noticed between courtesy rules in Greece and your native country?*
>
> – *Make a list of things that could cause an insult in your home culture. Try to find out whether they would cause the same feelings in Greece.*

[Simple DOS and DON'TS in Greece](#)

[Learn more about etiquette in Greece](#)

Explain to your friends where you live!

Imagine that you have to write a blog article introducing your countrymen to one aspect of life in Greece.

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.

Compare hospitality customs

Read the following article about the importance of hospitality in Greek culture.

"The Greek concept of hospitality, filoxenia (φιλοξενία), is deeply rooted in rituals that are expressions of an authentic relationship between guest, i.e., stranger, and host based on generosity, courtesy, and friendship. To the Greeks, moreover, the notion of xenia frames a form of ritualized friendship consisting of rules of behavior associated with respect, protection, and guidance that must not be violated. For instance, respect between host and guest, especially genuine displays of honor by the host at receiving the guest, is a longstanding staple of Greek hospitality. The true meaning of Greek hospitality, moreover, involves not only "equalizing" a stranger/guest with the host, but also making the her/him feel protected and taken care of, and at the end of the hosting encounter, even providing guidance to the next destination."
(Alex Pattakos, LinkedIn)

Now think: Is hospitality as important in your country? If so, how is this manifest in your traditions, practices and culture?

Main religious customs and taboos in the Greek society

The main religion in Greece is Christianity and more specifically the creed adjacent to Eastern Orthodoxy. The majority of Greek people are Christian Orthodox (90%). The second higher percentage belongs to atheists (4%) followed by other Christians except Catholics (3%), Muslims (2%) and other religions including Catholics (1%). In the modern Greek society and especially in the big cities, more and more people become non-religious.

Religion in Greece (2017)[1]

- Eastern Orthodoxy (90%)
- Other Christians (excluding Catholics) (3%)
- Irreligion (4%)
- Islam (2%)
- Other religions (including Catholics) (1%)

Most holidays in Greece relate to the Orthodox tradition such as Easter, Christmas, Clean Monday, March 25th and August 15th. These holidays are typically family events and as such are celebrated by religious and non-religious alike.

Christmas (December 25th)

In Greece, Christmas is one of the greatest religious feasts. December the 26th is also a holiday. One of the most characteristic features during the festive period before and after Christmas (a total of 13 days) is the exchange of wishes for "happy feasts", good health, prosperity etc.

On Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and Epiphany children go from house to house (and from shop to shop) singing carols. House owners reward them with some pocket money or offer them traditional Christmas sweets **(melomakarona** or **kourabiedes).**

Nearly all Greek homes are decorated with Christmas trees, garlands and lights. The Christmas tree is a custom that came to Greece from the northern countries, the Greek custom being traditionally the decoration

of the house with a boat (reflecting the importance of the sea in the life of Greeks). The traditional dish for Christmas is stuffed turkey.

Throughout the festive period gifts are exchanged with the family, colleagues and friends.

New Year (January 1st)

On the eve of New Year relatives and friends gather to celebrate together. They exchange gifts, play cards and cut together the Vassilopita (a special sweet pie for this occasion), which contains a coin supposed to bring good luck to the person who finds it. The entrance of the New Year is celebrated with fireworks and festive meals. According to the Orthodox tradition, it is on January the 1st that Aghios Vassilios (the counterpart of Santa Claus) offers gifts to children.

Holy Epiphany (January 6th)

The Holy Epiphany (also called "Fota" in Greek, meaning "Lights") is the day on which the waters are blessed. After the ceremony in church a priest throws a cross into the sea and young children or men dive to catch it. In folklore, it is reported that the day after that the goblins (kalikantzaroi), who throughout the twelve days were prying in the houses and causing damage to the housewives, disappear.

Carnival or "Apokries"

Apokries is a three-week period during which Carnival is held, with dances, masks, feasts and parades in each municipality and community. Very famous are the carnival processions of Patras, Xanthi and Kefalonia. Apokries culminates on Clean Monday.

Clean Monday or "Kathari Deftera"

On Clean Monday, Lent begins in the Orthodox Church, i.e. a fasting period of 40 days before Easter. Clean Monday is not only a day of fasting

but also a day of holiday. On that day it is common to eat lagana (unleavened bread made only on that day), taramas (a product made from fish eggs), fresh vegetables, as well as oil-free bean soup. It is also customary to fly kites.

March 25th: The Annunciation and the Independence of Greece

The 25th of March is both a religious and a national holiday. The announcement of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary is celebrated, that she was chosen to become the mother of Jesus, the Son of God, marking his incarnation. At the same time, celebrations take place for the anniversary of the estimated start of the Greek Revolution against the Ottoman Empire in 1821. Military and school parades are held in every place. The traditional dish for this day is cod.

Easter

Easter is the most important religious feast in Greece.

On Good Friday (Megali Paraskevi) the Passion of Christ is commemorated. The flowering of the Epitaph takes place, followed by solemn processions on the streets of the villages and in the neighbourhoods of the cities. In some parts of Greece (e.g. Crete), an image of Judas Iscariot, the traitor of Jesus Christ, is burned in fire. Good Friday is a mournful occasion and shops/businesses operate only for a few hours of the day.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated on Holy Saturday (Anastasi). Most people go to church at that day, even if they are not particularly religious. At midnight there appears a priest bearing the Holy Light and sharing it to the faithful, who carry with them big candles to that purpose. Outdoors, many young people throw firecrackers.

Believers leave the church with candles lit, and as soon as they get home, they make a cross with them on their doorstep. It is believed that the cross

will protect them and bring them good luck for the whole next year. The folk customs include dinner after the Resurrection with *mageiritsa* (Easter night's soup) as the main course.

On Easter Sunday celebrations take place throughout the country. Outdoors, a lamb is roasted on a skate. Red eggs, a brioche type sweet (tsoureki) and plenty of food and wine complete the festive meal. The lamb's scent is accompanied by dancing, singing and loud music.

Easter Monday is also a holiday. Depending on the region, several different customs are connected to Easter.

Traditional Easter tsoureki and red eggs

Easter Traditions in Greece

Assumption of the Virgin (August 15th)

The 15th of August is one of the greatest religious feasts in Greece. The assumption of Mary, mother of Jesus, to heavens is celebrated. Throughout the country many events and festivals take place. Most employees combine their summer holidays with the August 15 holiday. Many people all over Greece, named Maria, Marios, Panagiotis and

Panagiota have their name celebration on that day, which contributes to the festive spirit of the day.

Baptism

Baptism is one of the most significant ceremonies in the Christian Orthodox faith. It is thought to represent the young person's welcoming and acceptance of Christianity. Baptism is also considered to be a cleansing ritual from inherited sin, and it is seen as a blessing for a prosperous future, good luck and good health. Children are usually baptized after completing their first year of age.

Children are named after the Orthodox saints as a means to be kept safe. A close friend or relative acts as godfather or godmother (nonós /noná). The godfather's/ godmother's spiritual obligation is to educate the child in religious matters and to do so he/ she starts by putting around the child's neck a cross pendant. The role of godfather/godmother does not end there. After the baptism he/she maintains a steady presence in the child's life by accompanying them to church in order to receive a holy communion and by actively participating in various festivities (bringing gifts on Christmas, Easter, New Year's Day, birthday and name day). They are also responsible for a child's upbringing and well-being in case of a loss of a parent.

Nowadays for many Greeks baptism is less of a religious and more of a social event. However, it is still considered a very important ceremony and the role of the godfather/godmother is related to strong friendship bonds between the families.

Common superstitions

Like in any other culture, Greeks have certain superstitions, such as:

– They believe that if you see a black cat your day will be ruined.

– It is bad luck if you pass under a stair.

– Tuesday the 13th is considered to bring bad luck.

– They believe in the evil eye: Many Greeks, especially in the province, believe that one person can "look" at another by either envy or exaggeration. The evil eye causes bad feelings to the receiver not only physically but also psychologically. To avoid the evil eye, those who believe in it are wearing a blue pendant or a blue bracelet.

> ### *Did you know that in Greece people celebrate name-days?*
>
> *In Greece, name celebrations are as important as birthdays. While celebrating birthdays is a habit that has come from other countries, the celebration of nominal days is a typical Greek custom. It combines religious beliefs and methods of socialization and reconciliation. In earlier times it was also on opportunity for a break from farm work.*
>
> *A difference from birthdays is this: Name celebrations are held on the day on which the Saint that bears that name is commemorated and honoured by the Eastern Orthodox Church. This date is known to all. So all people bearing a certain name celebrate on the same day. Relatives, friends and colleagues call them to wish longevity and prosperity. Close friends and relatives meet for a party, buying*

- *Do you have the same or similar holidays in your home country?*

- *Were you shocked by any of the Greek traditions?*

- *What are the main customs of your home country? Do they differ significantly from Greek traditions?*

[Greek culture and traditions: Where the West meets the East](#)

[10 Unique Greek traditions](#)

Application of cultural knowledge in daily life

Consider the following situation and think about what you would do.

Mary is the mother of your son's classmate, and she's also a good friend of yours. She decided to become the godmother of her brother's child and she wanted to invite you to the baptism of the baby.

- Would you attend the event?
- If so, would you bring a gift for the newly baptised? What would it be – a toy, clothes, money?
- Would you join your friends to the christening party after the ceremony?

Hint: Attending a baptism and the party afterwards is considered a sign of friendship and respect. Gifts usually offered to the child include clothes and toys. However, if somebody does not attend the ceremony and/or the party due to a different faith, this is usually met with understanding. On the other hand, some may insist to have you with them at the party, just to have a good time together.

Review of Chapter 2

Greece has a rich culture that has developed over thousands of years, and a significant cultural legacy to the western world. Like most societies in today's modern and global community, the Greek society is changing and becoming less traditional. Family and strong personal relationships are among the most cherished values.

Ethnicity. To most Greek people their ethnic identity is very important, and they are very proud of the long history of their nation.

Language. The modern Greek language derives from ancient Greek and has been used continually for more than 3,000 years. Greek is the language of the vast majority in the country.

Religion. Greece has always been attached to the Eastern Orthodox Church, which in turn contributed a lot to the formation of the Greek culture during the past centuries and until today. Many customs and traditions reflect this influence.

Education. Good education is highly esteemed, and it is often pursued independently of employment prospects.

Holidays. Most holidays in Greece are linked to religion, while many customs originate in pagan traditions.

Suggested group activities

Activity 1: Holiday season

Almost all cultures and nations have some kind of celebrations around December. Take turns in your group 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. Ask the Greek trainer to find a Greek name with a similar meaning.

Activity 3: Have you ever?

The trainer may ask questions about past experiences. If you have had any of these experiences, raise your hand and talk about them with others who have also had such experiences. 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. Have you ever been without a shower for more than 2 weeks?
5. Do you have both a brother and a sister?
6. Have you ever ridden a horse?
7. Have you ever eaten frogs' legs?
8. Can you speak 3 or more languages?
9. Have you ever been in love with someone who was vegetarian?

10. Have you swum in 3 or more different oceans?

11. Have you ever flown an aeroplane?

12. Have you broken 3 or more bones in your body?

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

14. Have you ever free-climbed a tree or rockface more than 10 meters vertically?

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

16. Have you ever cooked a meal by yourself for more than 20 people?

17. Have you ever kept a budgerigar as a pet?

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

19. Can you not click your fingers on your non-dominant hand?

20. Have you ever seen a polar bear?

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What did I learn?

Assessment 1: Milestones in the history of Greece 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. **When did the first Olympic Games take place?**
   a) 776 BCE
   b) 490 BCE
   c) 336 BCE

2. **How did the Greek civilisation and language spread to a huge part of the ancient world?**
   a) Due to the Greco-Persian wars in the 5th century BCE
   b) Due to the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE
   c) Due to the creation of the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) in the 4th century CE

3. **When did the Independence War against the Ottoman Empire start?**
   a) 1813
   b) 1821
   c) 1844

4. **Which event led to a big refugee wave to Greece in the 20th century?**
   a) The war in Asia Minor that ended in 1922
   b) World War II
   c) The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991

5. **When did Greece enter the European Economic Community (now European Union)?**
   a) In 1967
   b) In 1976
   c) In 1981

Assessment 2: Key principles of the Greek society

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

1. **Greece is a Parliamentary Republic and the President of the Greek Republic is Head of Government.**

   True or False?

2. **Freedom of speech and religion are essential rights.**

   True or False?

3. **Discrimination on grounds of age, disability; gender; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief (including lack of belief); sexual orientation; or marriage and civil partnership is illegal.**

   True or False?

4. **Domestic violence is not legally prosecuted.**

   True or False?

5. **The legal age for gambling is 18.**

   True or False?

6. **Voting is mandatory.**

   True or False?

7. **Abortion is prohibited.**

   True or False?

8. **Labour strikes are permitted in Greece.**

   True or False?

Assessment 3: Greek 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.

During the past decades the Greek society is changing a lot, affected by globalisation, the internet, changing moral values and disappointment from highly esteemed institutions. As a result, the family became less important to the Greeks. Usually the core of the family (parents and children) lives together in an apartment or private house. It is preferred not to live close to grandparents, in order to avoid their interference in child-raising. It is normal for parents to support their children regardless of their age.

With regard to gender roles, there are no differences between men and women. Greek women work to contribute to the household income, while men have an equal share in household duties and the upbringing of children. Marriage is the only official act for a couple to be recognised as a family. Like in all European countries, there is also a trend for couples to live together without being married, which is now socially acceptable.

Good health, having a permanent job, owning a home and having a good time at home with the family are cherished things.

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. **Primary to tertiary education in Greece is _____.**

   a) compulsory

   b) free of charge

   c) private

2. **Statistics clearly show that many _____ are unemployed.**

    a) compulsory education graduates

    b) high-school graduates

    c) university graduates

3. **Often young people follow a prestigious university course regardless of the labour market needs. This is often related to _____ and to _____.**

    a) the expectations of parents / the low value attributed to technical education

    b) poor counselling at schools / ignorance of the real market needs

    c) personal ambitions / a refusal to accept career counselling

4. **The prevalent attitude towards success is closely related to _____ and _____.**

    a) having a happy family / leading a balanced life

    b) having a prestigious job / earning a lot of money

    c) following your dreams / finding happiness

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. When you are invited for dinner by a Greek, what is the polite thing to do when you are served?

2. What kind of eye-contact is interpreted as a sign of sincerity and good intentions?

3. When should you use the courtesy plural?

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

5. How should you interpret interruptions in a conversation with Greek people?

Assessment 6: Main religious customs and taboos in the Greek 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. **To which religion do 90% of Greek people officially belong?**

    a) Christian Catholic

    b) Christian Orthodox

    c) Christian Protestant

2. **The main religious feasts:**

    a) are celebrated by religious and non-religious people alike

    b) are celebrated only by religious people

    c) are observed only by a few people

3. **On Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve:**

    a) The houses are decorated with a Christmas tree and lights

    b) Children go from house to house and from shop to shop singing carols

    c) Wishes and gifts are exchanged

4. **The most important religious feast in Greece is:**

    a) Christmas

    b) Easter

    c) The Assumption of the Virgin (August 15th)

5. **The two national holidays of Greece are on:**

    a) 1 January and 15 August

    b) 21 May and 17 November

    c) 25 March and 28 October

6. **On Good Friday:**

    a) The announcement of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary is celebrated. The traditional dish is cod.

b) The resurrection of Jesus Christ is celebrated. Believers leave the church holding lit candles, and as soon as they get home they make a cross with them on their doorstep.

c) The Passion of the Christ is commemorated with processions on the streets. It is a mournful occasion and shops/businesses operate only for a few hours of the day.

7. The traditional dish for Easter Sunday includes:

a) Roasted lamb, red eggs and *tsoureki*

b) *Lagana*, *taramas* and fresh vegetables

c) Stuffed turkey and traditional sweets

8. Name celebrations in Greece are:

a) As important as birthdays

b) A habit that has come from other countries

c) Less important than birthdays

9. Which of the following is true about baptism?

a) It has declined in importance

b) It is still considered a very important event, even for social reasons

c) The godfather/ godmother is selected according to practical criteria

10. The evil eye is…

a) An obsolete superstition

b) A psychological phenomenon

c) A common superstition, according to which one person can "look" at another in either envy or exaggeration, causing physical and psychological ill-feeling to the receiver

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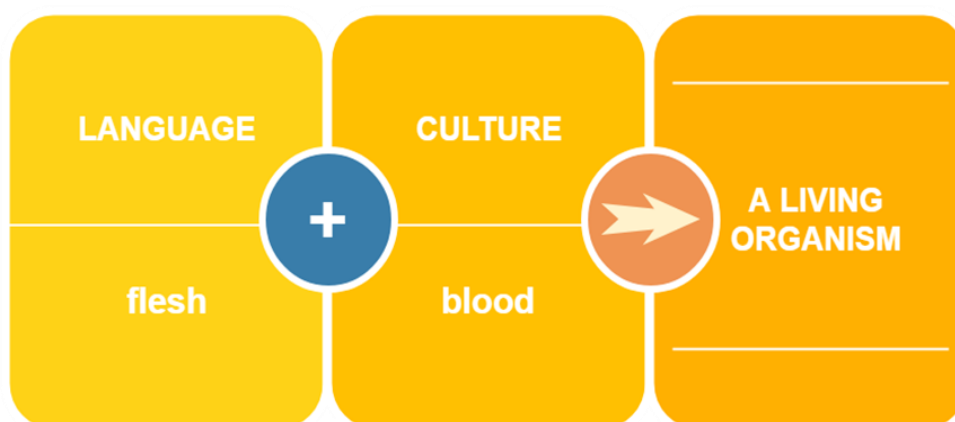
Language and culture makes a living organism; language is flesh, and culture is blood. Without culture, language would be dead; without language, culture would have no shape.

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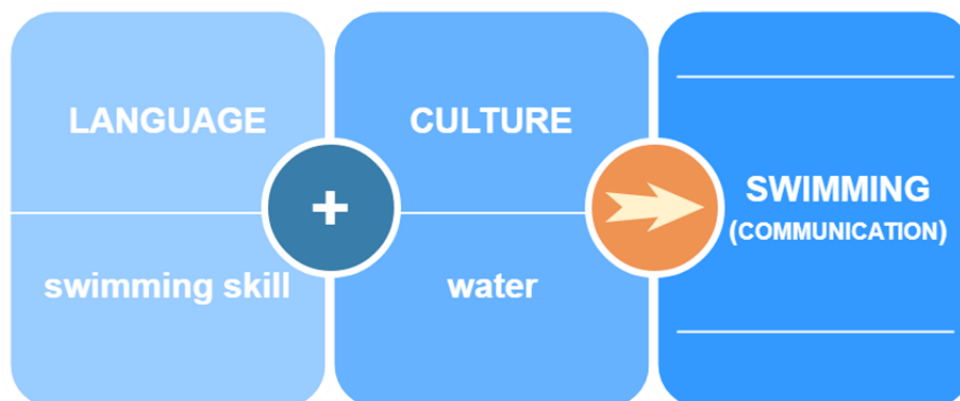
Communication is swimming, language is the swimming skill, and culture is water. Without language, communication would remain to a very limited degree (in very shallow water); without culture, there would be no communication at all.

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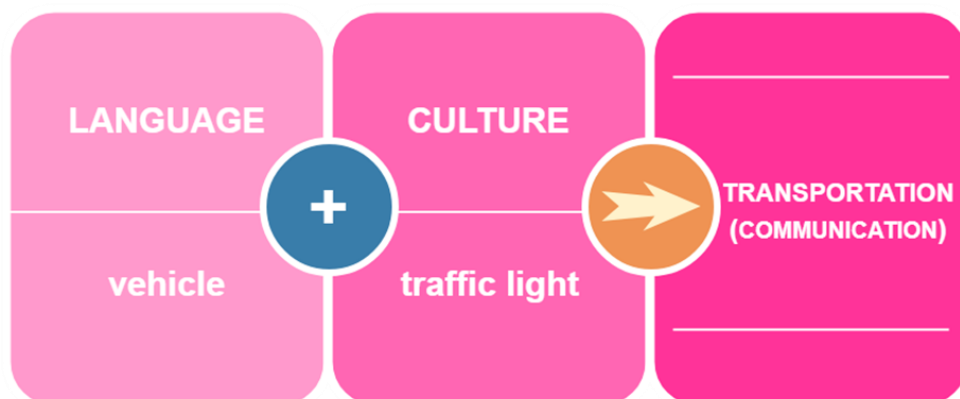
Communication is like transportation: language is the vehicle and culture is the traffic light. Language makes communication easier and faster; culture regulates, sometimes promotes and sometimes hinders communication.

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

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
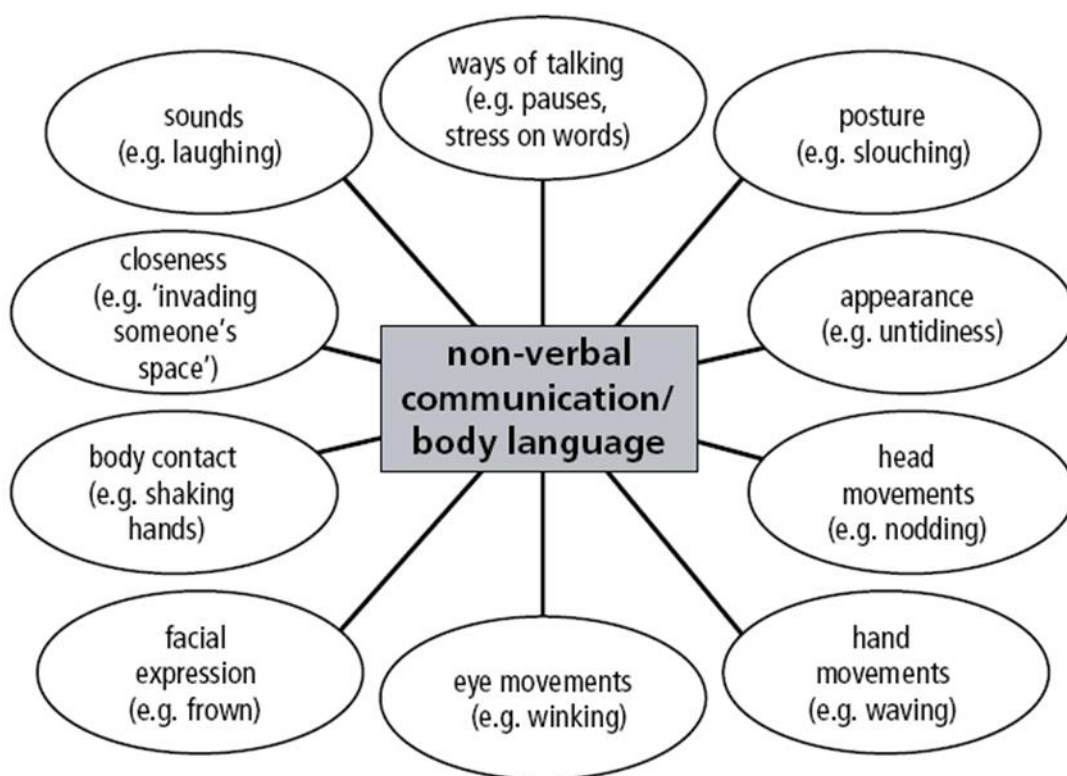
Aspects of non-verbal communication

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

Think about the following:

– 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 personal 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 it that makes you feel this way? Their body language? The way they express themselves? Something else?

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 behavior 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 demeanor 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
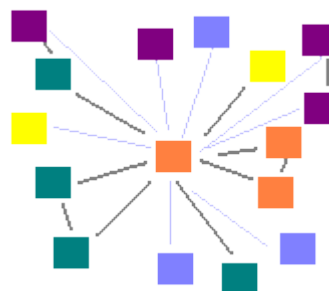
What are low and high context cultures?

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 <u>high-context culture</u> carry indirect meanings with more information than the spoken parts

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

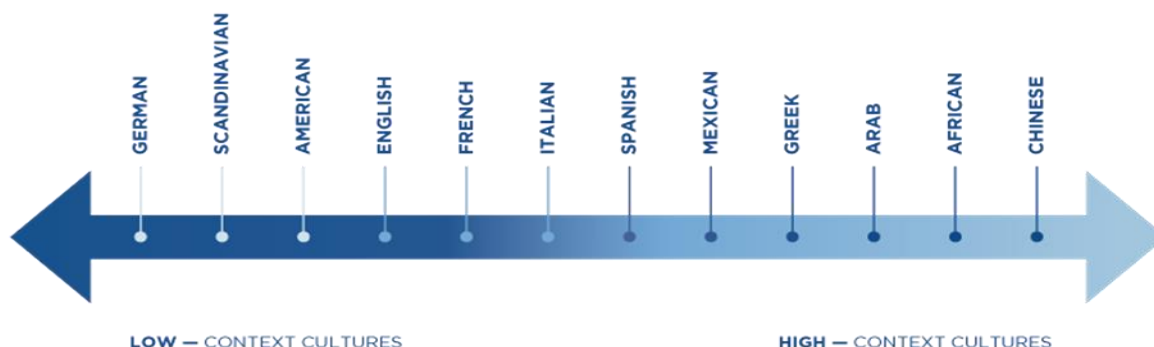High context communication   Low context communication

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.

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

<u>Task oriented cultures</u> 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, <u>relationship-oriented cultures</u> 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 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.

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.

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: *Non-verbal communication*

An interesting article that includes culture-specific non-verbal communication examples: *Non-verbal communication*

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

https://nonverbal.ucsc.edu/
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 colors, 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 abovementioned 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
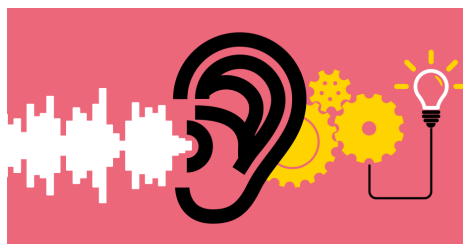
your pace will help, as will speaking clearly and pronouncing your words properly. Break your sentences into short sections and give your listener time to translate and digest your words as you go. But don't slow down too much as it might seem patronizing. If the person you're speaking to is talking 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)

- 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)
- 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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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. 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 patterns

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.

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. **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?

Click here to access the answer sheet.

LINK TO UNIT 2

Continue to <u>Unit 2,</u> ***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. c) 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 than 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. a; 2. b; 3. b; 4. a; 5. c

Assessment 2

1. False. Greece is a Parliamentary Republic but the Head of Government is the Prime Minister. The President of the Republic is the Head of State.

2. True.

3. True.

4. False. Domestic violence is a crime and is prosecuted by the law.

5. False. The legal age for gambling is 21.

6. True.

7. False. Abortion is allowed under certain conditions and until a certain age of the foetus.

8. True.

Assessment 3

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

During the past decades the Greek society is changing a lot, affected by globalisation, the internet, changing moral values and disappointment from highly esteemed institutions. *The family is very important to the Greeks.* Usually the core of the family (parents and children) lives together in an apartment or private house. *It is preferred to live nearby the grandparents, since these play a significant role in the upbringing of their grandchildren.* It is normal for parents to support their children regardless of their age.

With regard to gender roles, *the society is still patriarchal in a sense that males have still the leading role and are considered as the*

providers of the family. Greek women work to contribute to the household income but they *are still expected to be responsible for the majority of household duties and the upbringing of children.* Marriage, *along with the cohabitation agreement, are the two alternative* legal acts for a couple to be recognised as a family. Like in all European countries, there is also a trend for couples to live together without being married, which is now socially acceptable.

Good health, having a permanent job, owning a home and *having a good time outside with friends* are cherished things.

Assessment 4

1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. b

Assessment 5

1. You should accept everything you are served. If you refuse something, then it could be perceived as an insult to the host/hostess (unless there are serious health reasons).

2. Direct eye contact is welcomed and appreciated.

3. The courtesy plural is always used with strangers, superiors and persons older than oneself. However, younger people or people of the same age often address each other more informally, even if they don't know each other.

4. You could bring some sweets, a bottle of wine or a pot of flowers.

5. Don't be offended and don't think that you are expected to stop talking! Interrupting is not meant to be rude; it just shows the active participation of the other person in what is being said.

Assessment 6

1. b; 2. a; 3. b; 4. b; 5. c; 6. c; 7. a; 8. a; 9. b; 10. c

Chapter 3

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

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2. Think about it

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3. Additional external sources of information

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