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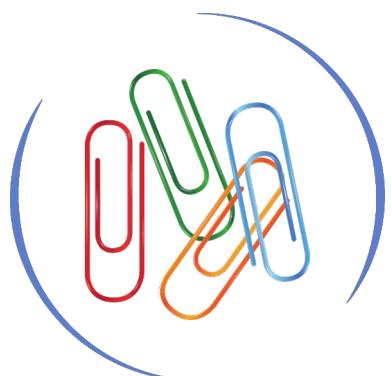
WP2 – Competences on integration and inclusion
for VET practitioners

Workshop n.1 “Diversity and intercultural dialogue”

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TRANSFORM

What Is Diversity?



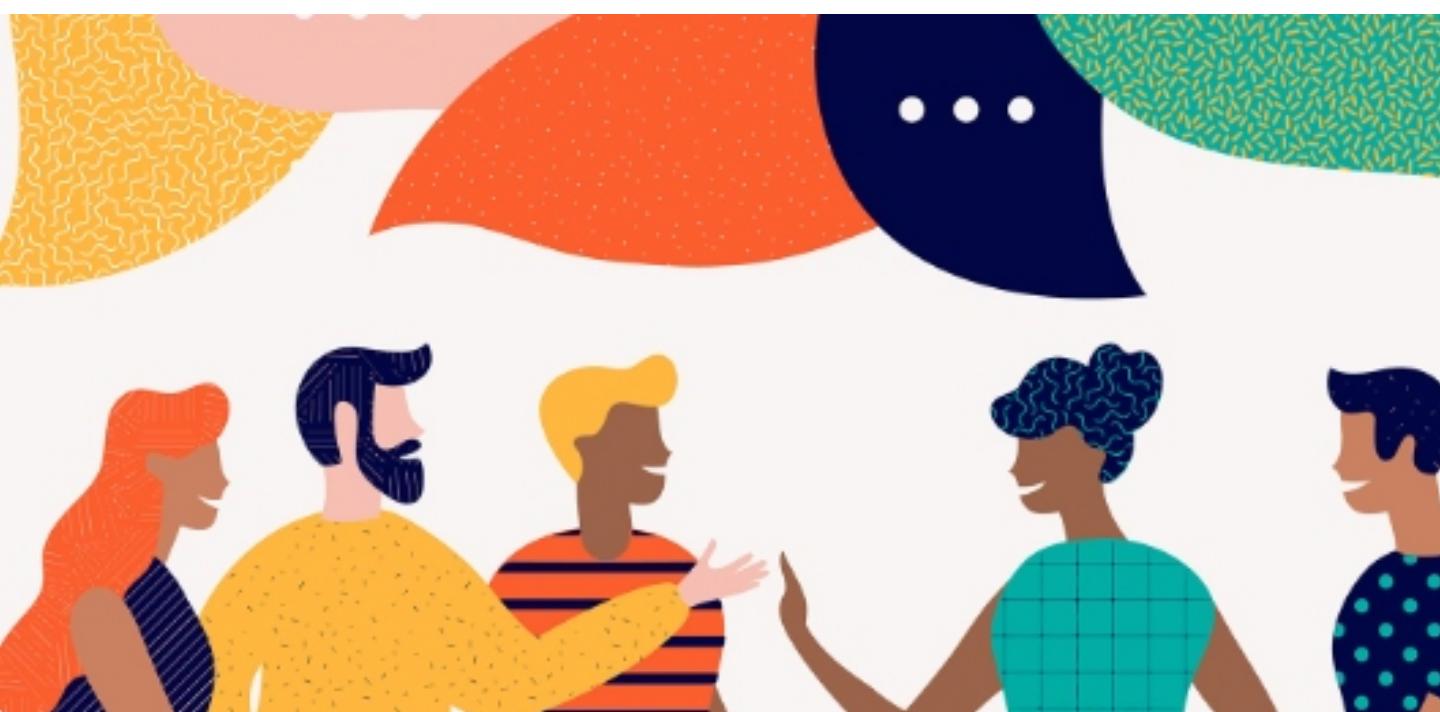
- **Diversity** refers to the situation or the quality of being different, the fact that somebody is “the other” or “different”. “I” or “we” is a condition, which refers to itself, when it comes with the relationship with the other.
- Nowadays, most educational environments are diverse. This poses challenges for learners, but also provides opportunities for personal growth.

How can diversity enhance intercultural contact?



- Diversity can increase the sense of belonging in individuals that belong to minorities.
- Students that sense a classroom climate that encourages contact and diversity have a higher cultural intelligence.

What Is Intercultural Dialogue?



Intercultural Dialogue refers to the open and respectful exchange of opinions, which is viewed as a means of bridging differences between cultures and resolving social, political, and economic issues and collisions. Intercultural dialogues are seen as a practice that can help communities live in a peaceful and respectful multicultural environment.

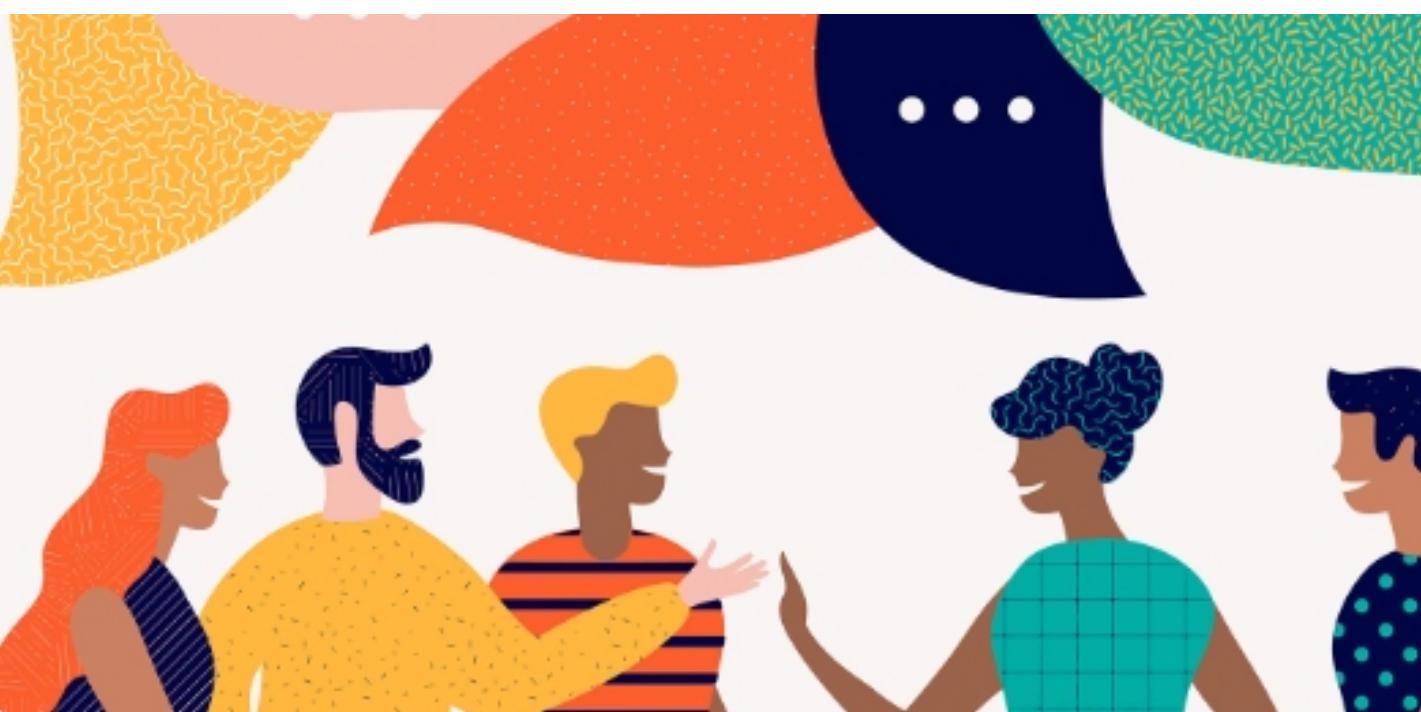
Intercultural Dialogue in practice

The implementation of intercultural dialogue poses many challenges:

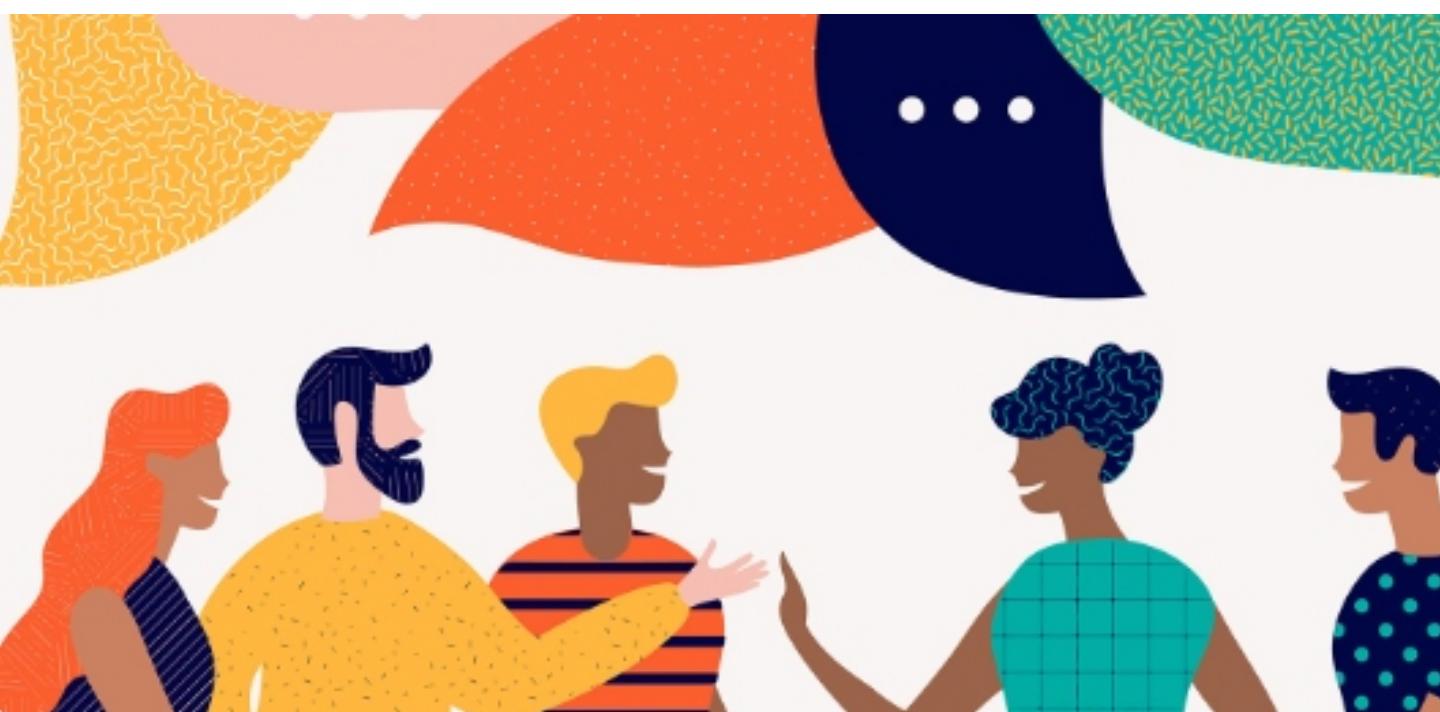
1. Language barriers: language barriers often obstruct intercultural communication.

2. Historical knowledge: The lack of historical knowledge can be related to increased prejudice, lack of respect and stereotypical thinking towards other cultures.

3. Intercultural dialogue is not just the outcome of intercultural contact. It requires several skills, such as critical thinking and communication skills, which are often dismissed, resulting in an inadequate attempt to practice intercultural dialogue.



Intercultural dialogue in practice



Researchers have recommended certain solutions for the aforementioned issues:

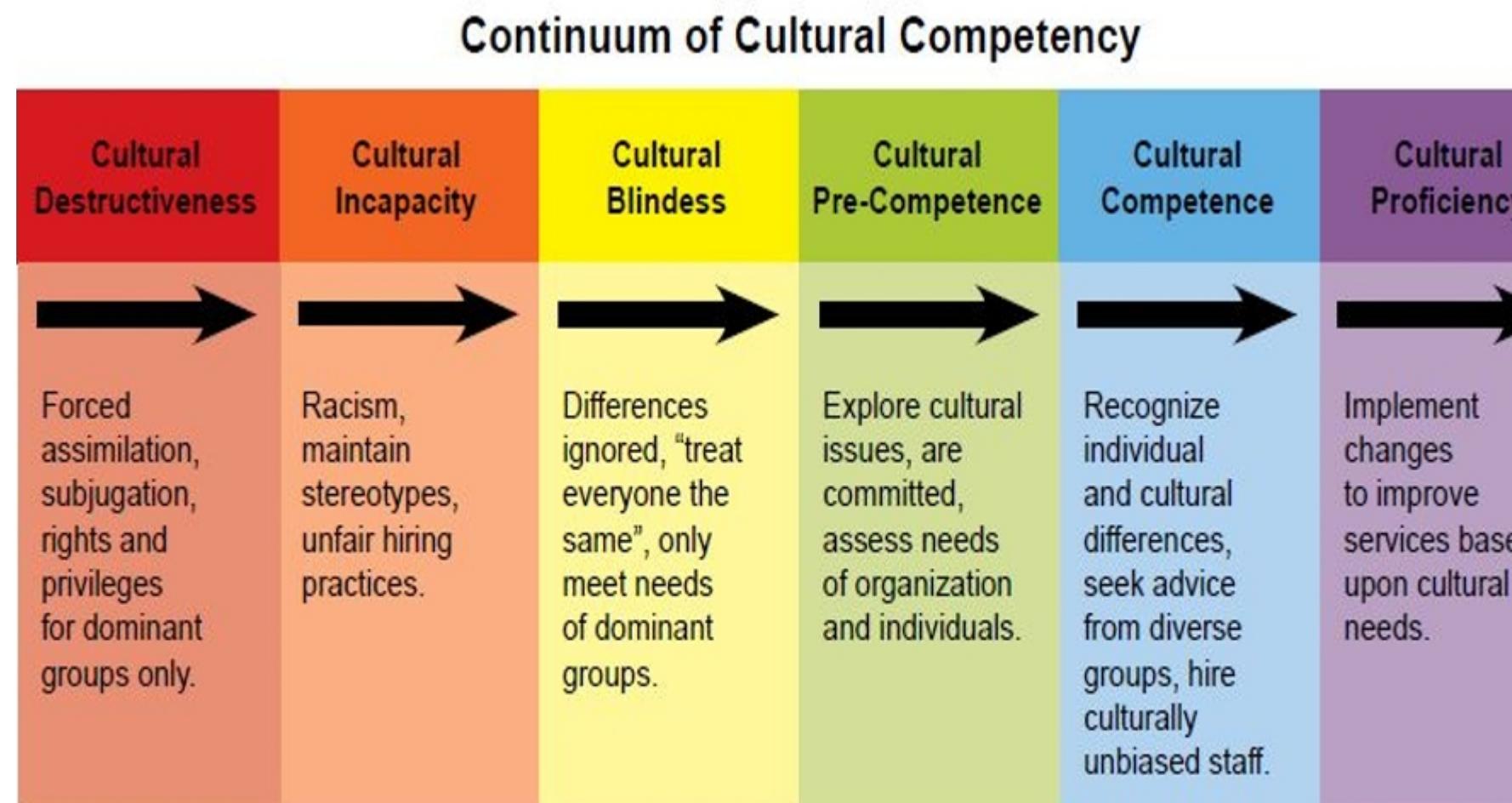
- 1. Multilingualism:** it can prevent stereotyping and lack of understanding and empathy towards culturally different individuals.
- 2. Historical knowledge:** knowing the history of other countries/nations can also increase empathy and openness towards them
- 3. Specific skills:** the possession of skills that are prerequisites for effective intercultural dialogue (mainly critical thinking) is essential.

What Is Intercultural Competence?



- **Intercultural competence** can be used as a tool to secure inclusive educational environments.
- It refers to the person's ability to interact effectively and develop balanced relationships with people from different cultural backgrounds by raising empathic awareness and cultivating cognitive, emotional and communicational skills.

Development of Intercultural Competence



- **Cultural destructiveness:** rejection of diversity, isolation attempt and systematic weakening.
- **Cultural incapacity:** cultural superiority feeling and attempt to weaken the culture of others.
- **Cultural blindness:** inability to understand the particular traits of each culture.
- **Cultural pre-competence:** recognizing the existence of limits on a person's skills or an organization practices in their interaction with other cultural groups.
- **Cultural competence:** A person's ability to interact and work effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of VET Educators



VET educators need certain knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in order to teach effectively in a diverse classroom:

Knowledge:

- understand that cultural background affects the way we see ourselves and others.
- cultural awareness: be aware of their own culture and the culture of their learners.
- awareness of the cultural differences and of ways to handle them respectfully.

Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of VET Educators



Skills:

- recognition and respect of the richness and complexity of other cultures.
- adequate and culturally responsive communication skills.
- adaptability of their behaviour and communication skills depending on the message receptor.
- transmission of their skills and attitudes to their learners.

Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of VET Educators



Values and attitudes:

- sensitivity and awareness of cultural diversity.
- respect of interpersonal and intercultural diversity.
- fostering of a classroom environment that welcomes and celebrates diversity.
- openness towards different opinions and mindsets.

Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes of VET Educators

It is important to keep in mind that:

- These skills, attitudes and knowledge are necessary for educators to properly address diversity.
- Educators need a positive perspective towards diversity, and they need to be aware of their own prejudices and attitudes.
- If diversity is not properly addressed, diverse learners are in danger of facing discriminations and exclusion.

Therefore, VET educators need to be properly trained and prepared to work with diverse learners.

Culturally Responsive Teachers



It is widely acknowledged that teachers play an important role in the shaping of their students, therefore they need to be informed and sensitive towards their students' diverse cultures. Experience with diversity is essential for teachers to be culturally responsive. Also, some researchers support that it develops over time due to a variety of experiences with diversity and with teaching.

Culturally Responsive Teachers



To put culturally responsive teaching into practice, follow these ideas:

- Identify students' needs (strengths, interests, cultural values etc.).
- Create a welcoming classroom environment and help every student feel accepted: learn how to pronounce their names correctly (incorrect name pronunciation is a common micro-aggression tactic and can make students feel rejected), learn about students' lives, support them outside of class, include diversity in the classroom space.

Culturally Responsive Teachers



To put culturally responsive teaching into practice, follow these ideas:

- Examine the curriculum to increase rigor and relevance: include diversity in the curriculum (e.g. in exercises and projects), include higher-level work and help students achieve it individually.
- Explore resources to deepen your own understanding: reflect on your personal perspective and beliefs,

Blended Teaching Modality

Blended Teaching Modality refers to the exploitation of online educational material and traditional face-to-face teaching. Opportunities for online interaction are provided, and the educator focuses on students' independent learning at home. Also, if face-to-face meetings are not feasible, educators substitute this contact with online meetings, webinars etc.



A research that was conducted indicated that global blended teaching modality facilitates cross-cultural understanding by allowing cross-cultural contact between learners. Also, teachers stated that the blended modality allowed them to engage in the teaching process in a more cross-cultural way, as well as offer culturally responsive help when needed. Therefore, this method could be used as an innovative tool to work with diverse learners.



It Wasn't Easy Growing Up As An Immigrant



It Wasn't Easy Growing Up As An Immigrant



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Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIxSJW_Q2mQ

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