

# Intercultural Competence Toolkit

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## A Poem by Bernard Werber

Entre  
Ce que je pense  
Ce que je veux dire  
Ce que je crois dire  
Ce que je dis  
Ce que vous avez envie d'entendre  
Ce que vous croyez entendre  
Ce que vous entendez  
Ce que vous avez envie de  
comprendre  
Ce que vous croyez comprendre  
Ce que vous comprenez  
Il y a dix possibilités qu'on ait des  
difficultés à communiquer.  
Mais essayons quand même...

Between  
What I think  
What I want to say  
What I think I'm saying  
What I say  
What you've felt like hearing  
What you think you're hearing  
What you're hearing  
What you've felt like understanding  
What you think you understand  
What you understand  
There are ten chances that we'll have  
difficulties communicating with each  
other.  
But we will try anyway.

## Fundamental Concepts in IC

### *What does NOT lead to Intercultural Competence?*

1. Cultural knowledge does not equal cultural competence.
2. Language learning may not be sufficient for culture learning.
3. Disequilibrium does not necessarily lead to dissatisfaction.
  - Learning that upsets our previous understanding of the world can result in teachable moments **when the learning is well-facilitated.**
4. Cultural contact does not necessarily lead to competence.
5. Cultural contact does not always lead to significant reduction of stereotypes.
  - **Reducing anxiety** during new cultural contact is key.

*(Bennett, 2008, p. 17, emphasis added)*

## *What DOES lead to Intercultural Competence?*

1. Intentional and developmentally sequenced program design.
2. Balancing challenge and support; anxiety reduction.
3. Facilitating learning before, during, and after intercultural experiences.
4. Depth of intercultural experiences, language immersion.
5. Intercultural competence training.
6. Cultivating **curiosity** and **cognitive complexity** (seeing through many perspective).

*(Bennett, 2011)*

## What you can do in your classroom to encourage IC

- Model humility and curiosity.
  - Personal stories are great for this. Share an experience when you misunderstood another person's actions because of a cultural clash. What did you do? How did you react? What was the outcome of the interaction?
- Create an assignment that takes the learner outside of the classroom and outside of their comfort zone.
  - Think interviews, profiles, ethnographies.
- Ask students to write reflectively about cultural experiences. Show models of effective, critical, reflective writing (see [www.intercultural.org](http://www.intercultural.org) for ideas and tips)

## Suggested Resources about IC

### Videos

All videos can be found at this website: <http://www.cb-films.org/>

#### 1.) \*\*\* *Crossing Borders* (2009)

*Summary from website:* The first film of Crossing Borders Films' intercultural trilogy, *Crossing Borders* is a seventy minute documentary that follows four Moroccan and four American university students as they travel together through Morocco and, in the process of discovering The Other, discover themselves. With group travels and frank discussions, the students confront the complex implications of the supposed clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. The relationships formed through shared experiences contrast sharply with the media-shaped views Americans and Muslims have of each other. Humor, honesty and a willingness to be challenged all bring individuals closer to each other and the relationships that develop disarm hidden stereotypes.

Trailer: <http://www.cb-films.org/crossingborders>

#### 2.) *The Dialogue* (2013)

*Summary from website:* The second film of Crossing Borders Films' intercultural trilogy, *The Dialogue* was created by Crossing Borders Films and co-produced by Michigan State University. *The Dialogue* is a 68 minute documentary that follows four American and four Chinese university students as they travel together through Hong Kong and Southwest China. Together the students explore each others' backgrounds and learn cross-cultural communication skills. Their shared travel adventures, the emotion of culture shock, honest confrontations and discoveries about each other become doorways to deepen their understanding of the world, of themselves and of styles of communication that are able to bridge cultural differences.

Trailer: <http://www.cb-films.org/thedialogue>

#### 3.) *American Textures* (available spring 2016)

*Summary from website:* The third of Crossing Borders Films' intercultural trilogy, *American Textures* is a feature documentary that follows six creative individuals of Black, White and Latino origin on a journey through diverse communities in the southern United States. The journey pushes them to risk sharing their own stories, struggles and dreams. The honest confrontations, powerful discoveries, and growing empathy between them create vibrant doorways through which these true heroes forge deeper understandings of themselves, each other and the world they live in.

Trailer: <http://www.cb-films.org/americantextures>

## Resources

\*\*\*Bennett, J. & Bennett, M. [www.intercultural.org](http://www.intercultural.org). Intercultural Communication Institute.

- Activities and links to readings. So. Many. Conference materials.

\*\*\*Berardo, K. & Deardorff, D. (2012). *Building cultural competence: Innovative activities and models*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

- A collection of **engaging activities** to use for leading others in developing intercultural competence. A wonderful resource for teachers and IC trainers.

\*\*\*Fras, M. (2008). "Intercultural Communication Resource Pack," Salto-Youth Cultural Diversity Resource Center. [<https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-1789/Booklet%20Intercultural%20Communication%20Resource%20Pack.pdf>]

- A collection of **engaging activities** to use to lead young adults through intercultural communication activities.

Utlely, D. (2004). *Intercultural resource pack: Intercultural communication resources for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- A collection of **activities** for exploring intercultural communication **designed for English language learners**.

## Models of Intercultural Programs

Young, N. (2014). *Seeking best practices for integrating international and domestic students*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota. [[https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/14\\_integration\\_best\\_practices\\_overall.pdf](https://global.umn.edu/icc/documents/14_integration_best_practices_overall.pdf)]

- A collection of **snapshots of intercultural programs** at American universities, including peer mentoring groups, intercultural dialogue groups, volunteering, and academic intervention strategies.

## Theory

Bennett, J. (2008). "On becoming a global soul: A path to engagement during study abroad." In V. Savicki, *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education*. (pp. 13-31). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

- An essay that explores the definition of intercultural competence by extending it to include cognitive, behavioral, and affective competencies, which Bennett calls "The Mindset, The Skillset, and The Heartset."

Bennett, J. (2011). *Developing Intercultural Competence for International Education Faculty and Staff*. AIEA Conference, San Francisco, CA. [www.aieaworld.org](http://www.aieaworld.org)

- Some brief background, guidelines, and key factors. Great for an introduction to best practices in intercultural communication training.

Deardorff, D. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241-266.

- Currently, this is the most widely recognized and used model of intercultural competence.

\*\*\*Hooker, J. (2003). "The West." in *Working across Cultures*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- A *fantastic* explanation of the underlying rules and assumptions that govern a Western perspective.

Pusch, M. (2009). "The interculturally competent global leader." In D. Deardorff, *The Sage handbook of intercultural competence*. (pp. 66-84). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

- A theoretical exploration of how we should imagine the future intercultural global leader.

## What else?

- Know your faculty and staff who are involved with intercultural communication on a regular basis
  - Study Abroad
  - International Student and Scholar Services
  - Instructors of ESL / Intensive English Programs
  - Faculty who are non-native English speakers
  - Faculty who are interested in teaching abroad

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