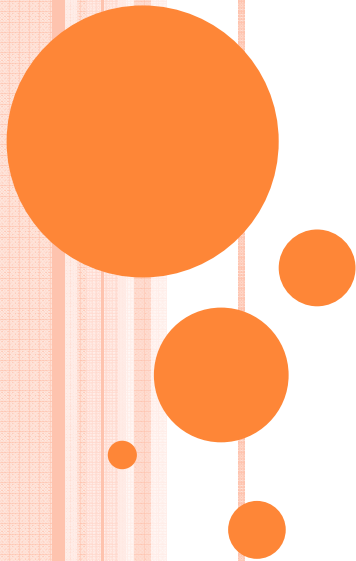


Intercultural Competence



Mag. Georg Ebner

**Klinischer-, Gesundheits-, Arbeits- und
Notfallpsychologe**

georg.ebner@chello.at



What is Culture?

... is a
software of
the mind
Geert Hofstede



... is the way in
which a group
of people
solves
problems!
Edgar Schein



... is like an
onion; to
understand it,
you have to
unpeel it layer by
layer!
Fons Trompenaars

Culture

Culture is the collective programming of the mind of members of one group or category of people, which distinguishes them from a different group or category.

Hofstede



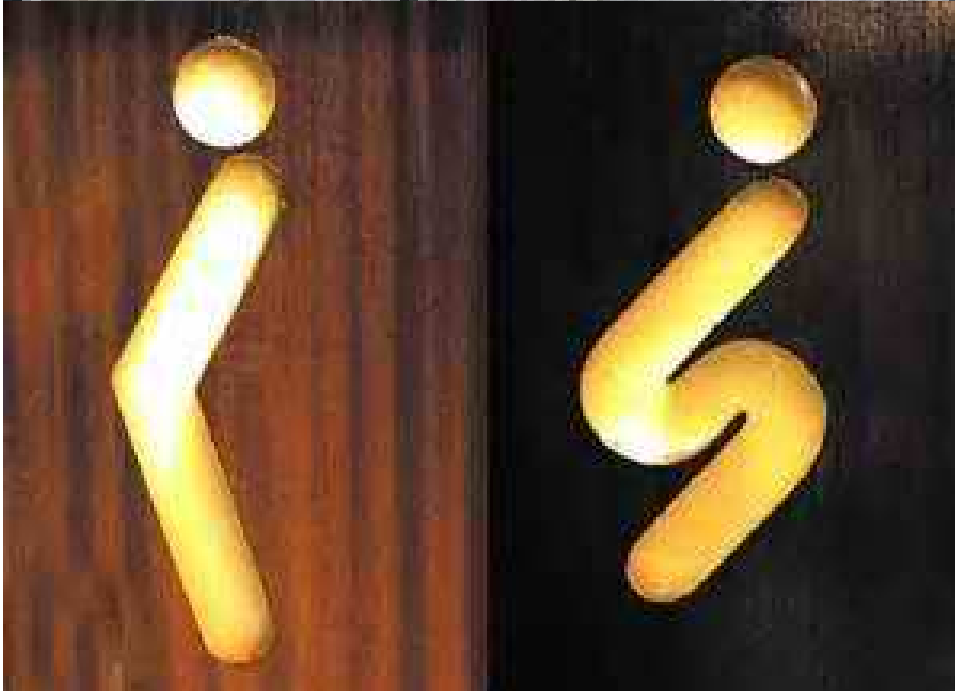
5 Dimensions by Hofstede

- Power distance
- Individualism vs. collectivism
- Masculinity vs. femininity
- Avoiding uncertainty
- Short-term orientation vs. long-term orientation





© ROMAN LANG



He.



She.

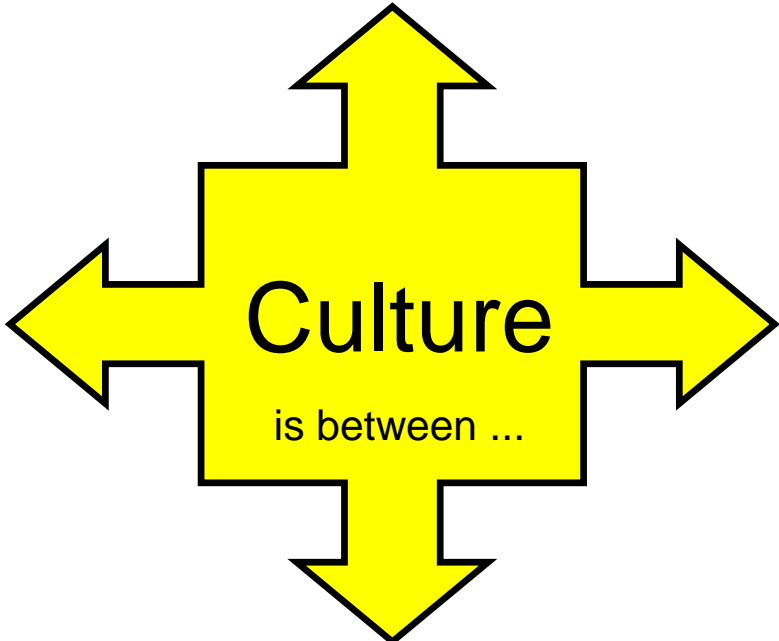


Cross-Cultural Competence Process

Cultural dynamic / change of values

Universalism

Universal human values?



Anything goes ?

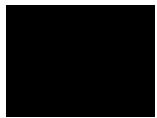
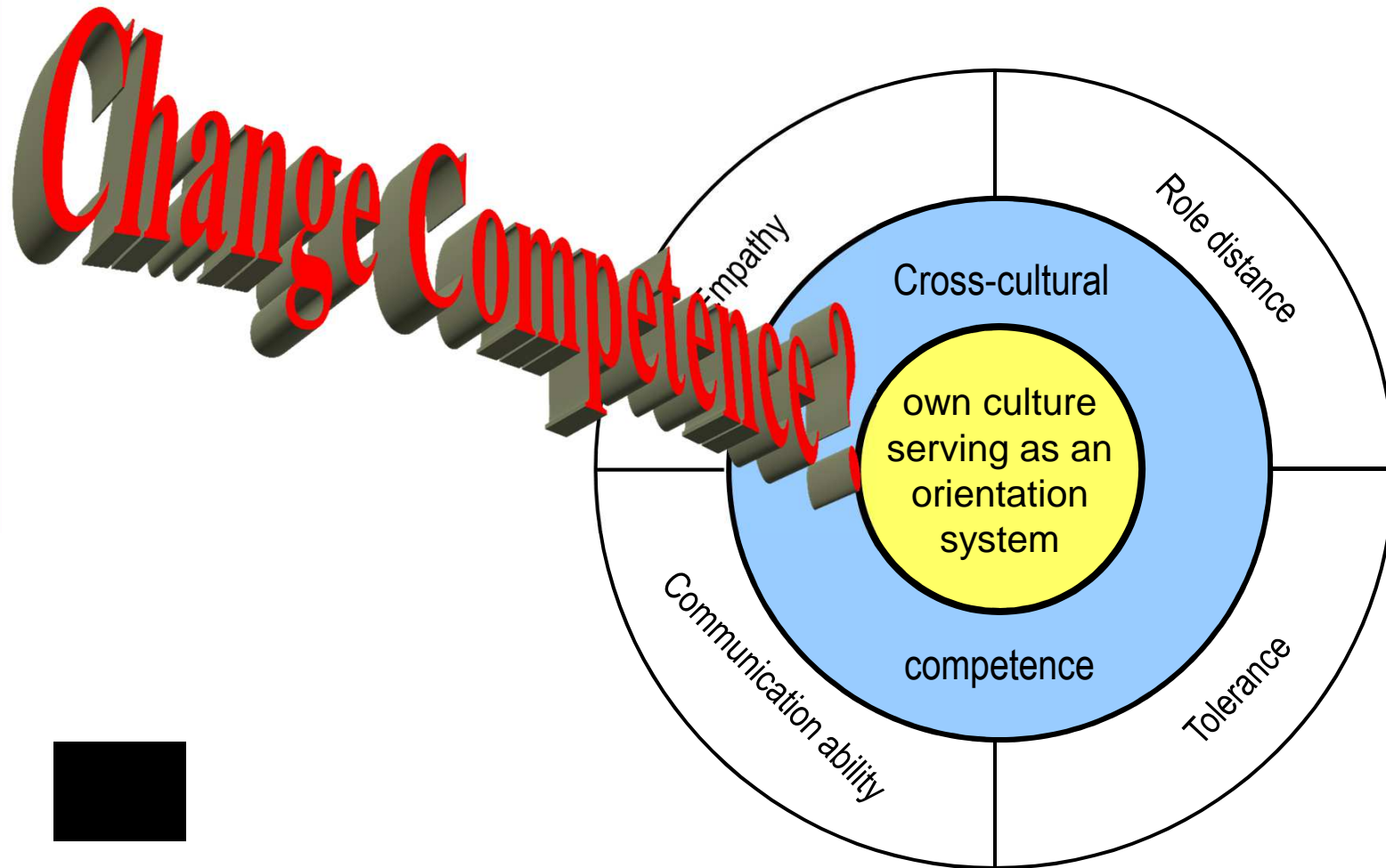
Relativism

structure

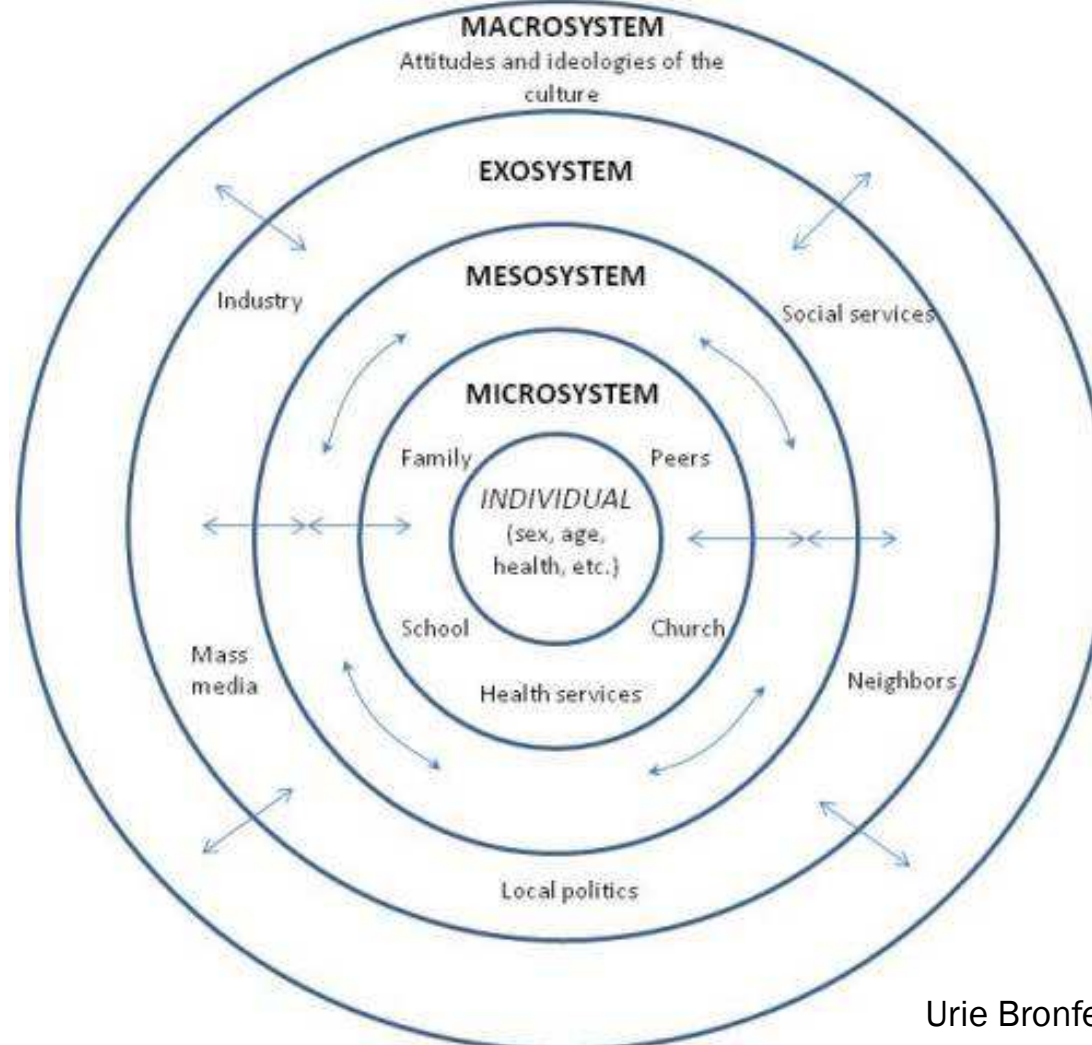
Cultural dimensions,
organizational image



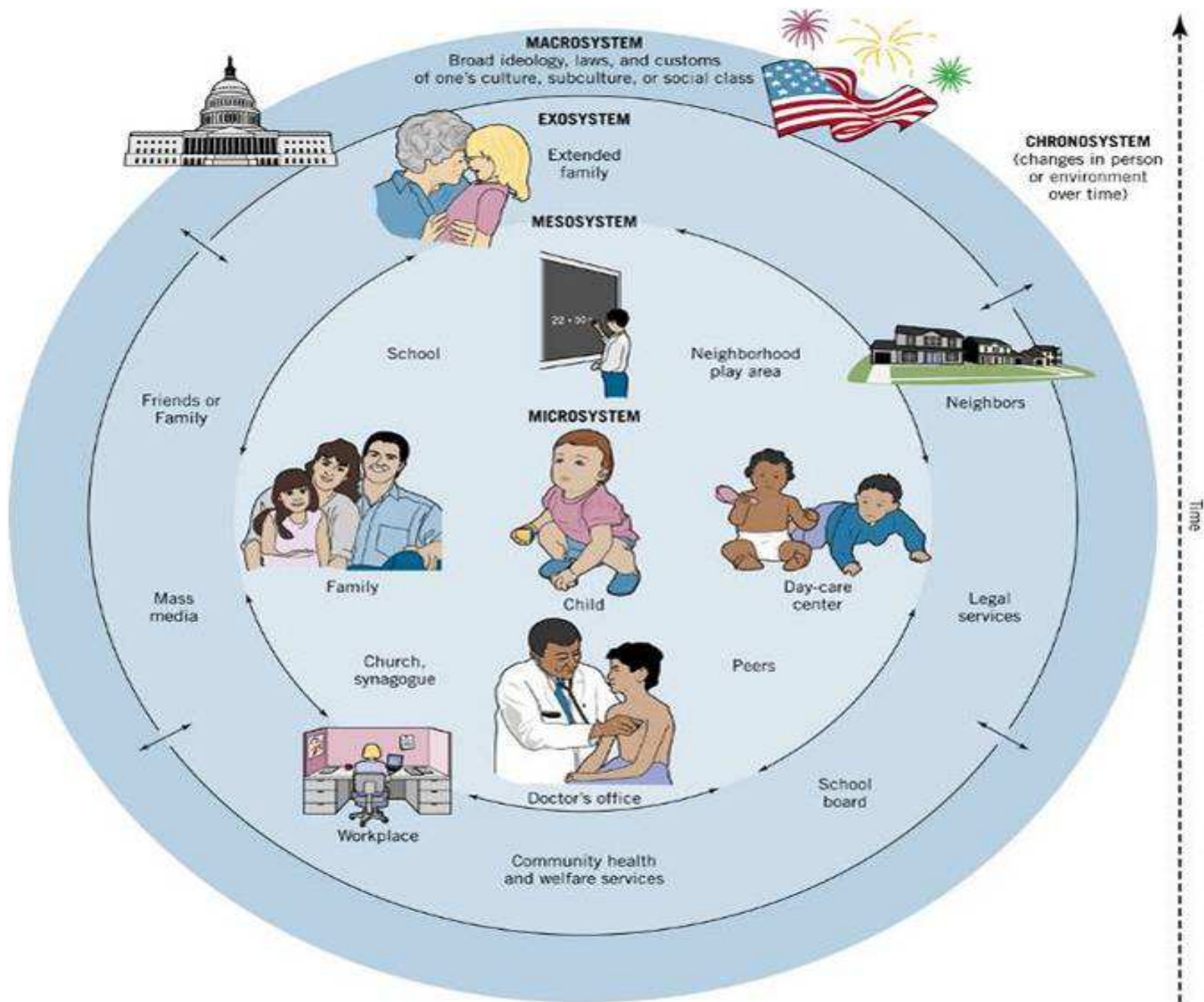
Basic skills pertaining to intercultural competence



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development



Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917 - 2005)



Cross-Cultural Competence

- Ability describing the process of acquiring information and behaviors, which helps us to cope with a task, meet a challenge or perform an activity in the intercultural field
- Orientation towards norms and values
- Concurrence of different ways of thinking, behavior patterns and lifestyles

Yousefi, 2011



Iceberg model



Artifacts



Artifacts

... form on the surface (entirely visible). We can see them, but we cannot understand them without deeper knowledge of the culture in question. Our interpretations often lead to wrong conclusions.

- Clothing, appearance
- Language, facial expressions, gestures
- Food
- Folk music ...





Artifacts

Norms



Norms

Cultural norms are rules (some of them are visible) that are known to the members a group. Group members are expected to follow these norms, irrespective of whether they share these personal values or not.

How I should be

- Rules
- Guidelines
- Ideals
- Personal views





Artifacts

Norms

Values



Values

A value is a preference (partly visible) that is shared by a group. Values are always collective, describing things in categories, such as "good and evil" or "clean and dirty" –
How I would like to be

- Result orientation
- Hospitality
- Competition
- Friendship
- Harmony





Artifacts

Norms

Values

Fundamental assumptions



Fundamental assumptions

They are completely invisible

- Human nature
- Relationship with the environment



Characteristics of intercultural competence

- Recognize adherence to culture
- Overcome culturalism
- Develop respect towards other cultures
- Take into account divergences and convergences
- Be tolerant with regard to ambiguity

Yousefi, 2011



Requirements for different missions



<http://kurier.at/chronik/oesterreich/hilfeinsatz-im-ausland-voll-im-tre>



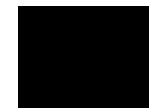
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<https://www.asb.or.at/seite477.aspx>

Special Topics

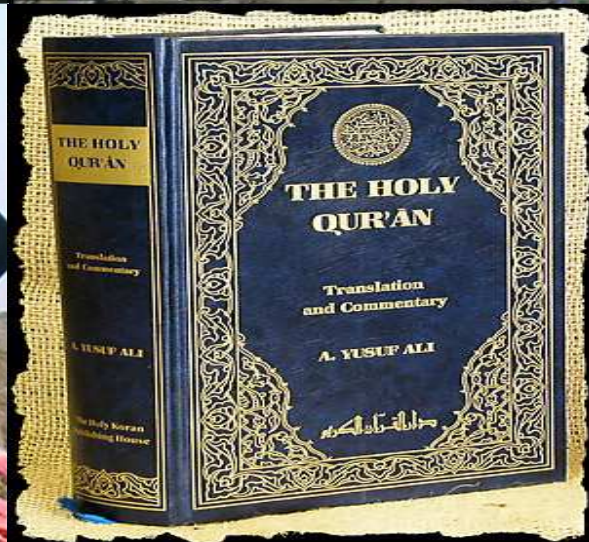
- Family (males, females, children)
- Gender (male, female, transgender)
- Anti-discrimination
- Food (what ?, where?), Rhamadan ...
- Training
- Holiday
- Alcohol, tobacco
- Language (empathy)
- Gestures, facial expressions, body language (touch?)
- Traffic and transport (cars & safety)
- Perception and use of time



Cooperation with different military and civilian organisations



Practical experiences (Kosovo)



Practical experiences (Pakistan)



A few topics

- Culture
- Cross-cultural communication
- Practical activities and military operations
- Prejudice and stereotypes
- Personal identity
- Perception



A few topics

- Influence of culture on perception, feelings, thoughts and actions
- Culture as values and norms, which regulate human behaviour
- Culture as the possibilities and limitations for human action
- Cooperation in multicultural teams
- Diversity and education



Cross-Cultural Communication

- Dealing with feelings of strangeness and familiarity
- Sense of personal concern – previous experiences important
- Cognitive and emotional restructuring in perceiving and assessing others
- Need for social support for orientating oneself and ensuring one's identity
- Need for interpersonal consistency



Cross-Cultural Communication 2

- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Body language
- Cultural background
- Man / woman / child / family
- Social norms and values
- Loudness of speaking
- Tone of voice
- Courtesy
- Friendliness
- Prejudices and stereotypes



Problem Areas

- Language:
 - common additional language, no common additional language, foreign language skills of a partner, mother tongue, ...
- Content level:
 - Taboo topics, private topics, ...
- Relationship level:
 - Power, social position, ...
- Nonverbal communication:
 - Facial expressions, gestures, body language, eye contact, ...



Differences in Perception (1)

The Ignorant:

Everyone thinking or acting in a different manner than himself is considered to be either stupid, unwilling or unable. Cultural differences in behavior are not attributed any significance.

Alexander Thomas, 2005



Differences in Perception (2)

The Universalist:

Assumes that people all over the world are basically the same. Cultural differences are, if at all, only of minor importance. He is convinced that all problems can be mastered with kindness, tolerance and assertiveness.



Differences in Perception (3)

The Doer:

To him, cultural influences on thinking or behavior are not that important. Decisive is to know what one wants, to have clear objectives and to be able to communicate them in a persuasive manner in order to assert them.



Differences in Perception (4)

The Exponentiator:

Assumes that each culture forms ways of thinking and acting, being learned and recognized as correct by the members of the respective culture. Cultural differences can be harmonised and intertwined so as to generate synergetic effects, from which one partner or both of them can profit.

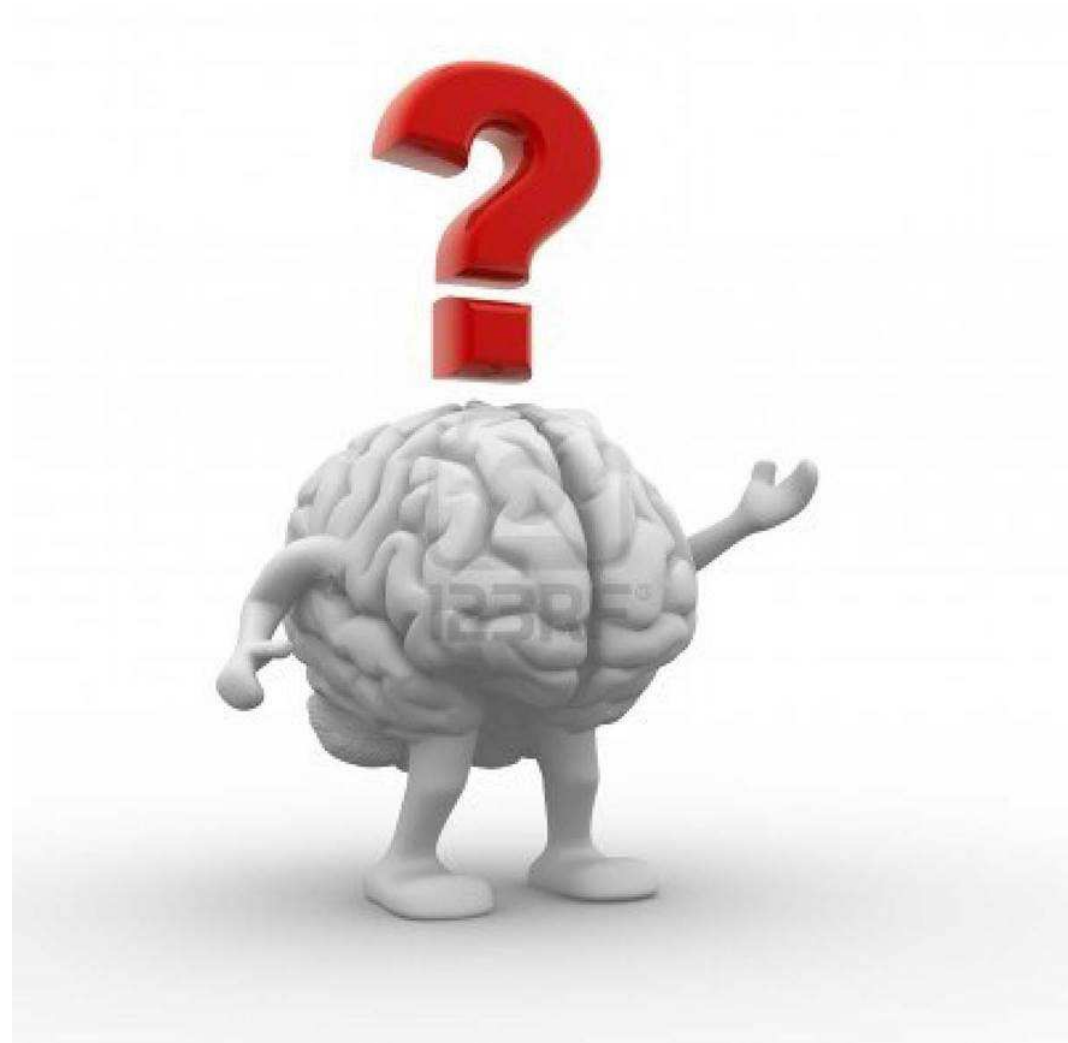


Fields of practice

- International operations
- Management
- Stays abroad
- Studies abroad
- Development aid workers....



- Thank you for your attention!
- Any remarks or questions?





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