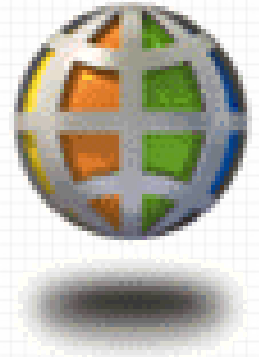# Psychology of intercultural communication

Why?

In our global world intercultural communication is a "must". Business and life success is now more and more about creating and nurturing strong relationships with international and multicultural colleagues, customers and clients. *Cultural competency* training is critical for anyone working either internationally or in a multicultural environment.

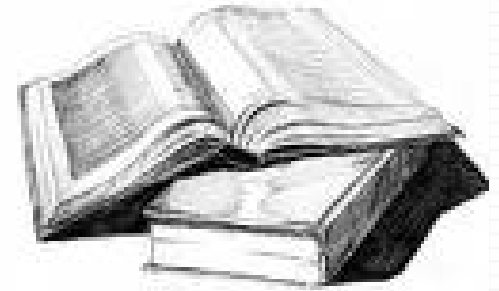# Benefits of *intercultural competency* training

- **1. Self-Awareness:** People learn about their own strengths, weaknesses, prejudices and preconceptions.
- **2. Builds Confidence:** Cultural competency training promotes self-confidence in individuals and teams through empowerment.
- **3. Breaks down Barriers:** Our cultural training demystifies 'the other' and creates awareness.
- **4. Builds Trust:** Awareness leads to dialogue which leads to understanding which results in trust.
- **5. Motivates:** Through self-analysis people begin to recognize areas in which they need to improve and become motivated to develop.
- **6. Opens Horizons:** Cultural competency training helps people think outside the box.
- **7. Develops Skills:** Participants develop better 'people skills' - they begin to deal with people with sensitivity and empathy.
- **8. Develops Listening Skills:** By becoming good listeners, people become good communicators.
- **9. Career Development:** Cross cultural competence training enhances people's skills and therefore future employment opportunities.

Outline

- Major **objectives and tasks** of intercultural psychology
- Intercultural psychology and **other sciences**: ethnic psychology, anthropology, comparative cultural psychology.
- **Terms and notions** of intercultural psychology.
- **Methodology** of intercultural psychology
- **History and development** of intercultural psychology.
- **Modern state** of intercultural psychology, principal scholars(Hall, Hofstede, Triandis etc.).

Definition

- ***Intercultural psychology*** studies specific psychological functions, parameters and laws from cross-cultural perspective with the emphasis on cultural universals

- ***Intercultural psychology*** - is a science investigating similarities and differences in psychology of individuals belonging to diverse cultural and ethnic groups, links between psychological differences and socio-cultural, ecological and biological peculiarities.

More definitions

- 1992 Berry "Cross-Cultural Psychology"

Cross-cultural psychology is the study of similarities and differences in individual psychological functioning in various cultural and ethnic groups, of the relationships between psychological variables and sociocultural, ecological and biological variables; and of current changes in these variables

Major objectives of intercultural communication psychology

- ***Testing*** of psychological theories based on the facts obtained in one culture and ***applying*** them to facts in another culture

- ***Research*** into ethnic and psychological characteristics of different cultures

- ***Integrating data*** obtained from the study of diverse cultures with the view to create universal psychological approach which would be valid to most cultures of the world

- ***Creation*** of metatheories on a higher philosophical level

Major tasks of intercultural communication psychology

To study:

- Means of presenting ***picture of the world*** in values and convictions of people;

- National cultural awareness as it is reflected in culturally specific ***modes of thought and behavior***;

- Role of ***verbal and non-verbal communication*** in cross-cultural contacts;

- Main principles of ***cross-cultural communication***;

- Effective methods of ***cross-cultural conflicts*** resolutions;

- Processes of ***cultural adaptation***;

- Cultural and ***national identity*** formation;

- Interrelation of cultural ***stereotypes*** and cultural ***values***

Aspects of cross-cultural research

- *Cultural* variables (different and universal)

- *Biological* variables (eating habits, genotype, physiological processes)

- *Environmental* variables (adaptation to environment – population density)
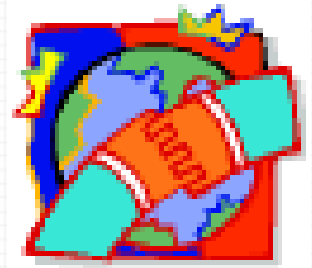
Universals in sciences

- ***Biology*** – basic needs: food, drink, sleep, sex

- ***Sociology*** – types of relationships: family, friendship, community, state, army

- ***Linguistics*** – grammar, phonetics, vocabulary

- ***Anthropology*** – customs (birth, wedding, funeral) and social institutes (government, court, marriage, educational system)

Intercultural psychology and other sciences

- Anthropology
- General psychology
- Cultural psychology
- Cultural anthropology
- Ethnology
- Ethnography
- Cultural studies
- Lingo-country studies
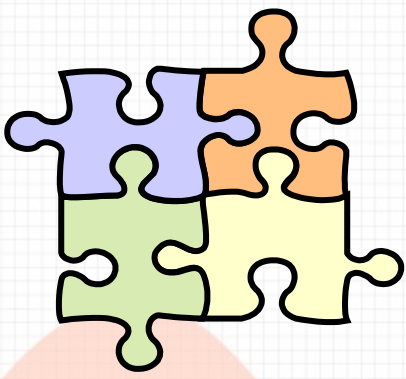- Sociolinguistics

Areas of overlapping

- *Anthropology* studies man in his physical and social aspects
- *Psychology* studies mechanisms of psyche underlying human behavior
- *Ethnology* theoretically compares contemporary cultures and studies their history
- *Ethnography* is a practical and descriptive study of world cultures
- *Sociolinguistics* studies the role of language in shaping human society
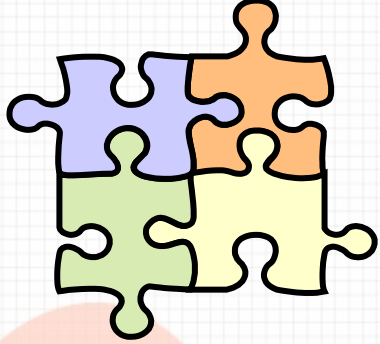
Major terms and notions

- Culture
- Identity
- Mentality
- National character
- Picture of the world

- Ethnos
- Nation
- People
- Race
- Civilization

Culture

- the acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behaviour
- a highly developed state of perfection
- arts, beliefs, customs, inventions, language, technology and traditions.
- a people's whole way of life, simple or complex
- **is a system of building identity**

Nation

- **a large group of people with strong bonds of identity**

- Synonym to a *state*: a politically organized body of people under a single government; "the state has elected a new president"; "African nations"

- the *people* who live in a nation or country; "the news was announced to the nation"

- territory or *country* as political entity or a grouping of people who share real or imagined common history, culture, language or ethnic origin, often possessing or seeking its own government

In the strict sense, terms such as "nation," "*ethnos*," and "people" denote a group of human beings. The concepts of nation and nationality have much in common with ethnic group and ethnicity, but have a more political connotation, since they imply the possibility of a nation-state. *Country* denominates a geographical territory whereas *state* expresses a administrative and decision-making institution.

The English word "nation" comes from the French word "nation" (itself derived from the Latin term natio) (*nātĭō, stem nātiōn-*), meaning:

- The action of being born; birth; or
- The goddess personifying birth; or
- A breed (like a dog), stock, kind, species, race
- A tribe, or any set of people

As an example of how the word *natio* was employed in classical Latin, consider the following quote from Cicero's *Philippics* in 44 BC. Cicero contrasts the external, inferior *nationes* ("races of people") with the Roman *civitas* ("community")

Identity

One's own self that emerges in process of intercourse with other individuals

Identity involves:

- a link between the personal and the social;

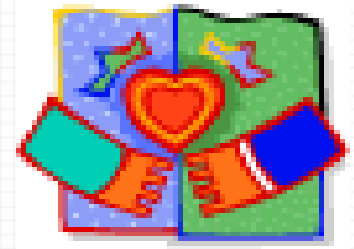- being the same as some people and different from others, as indicated by symbols and representations;

We differentiate between *gender, age, race/ethnic, geographic, class, status, economic identities*

"Identity" refers to either

(a) a social category, defined by membership rules and characteristic attributes or expected behaviours

(b) socially distinguishing features that a person takes a special pride

(c) personal characteristics or attributes

Personal identity deals with questions that arise about ourselves by virtue of our being people Many of these questions are familiar ones that occur to everyone at some time: What am I? When did I begin? What will happen to me when I die?

Miscellaneous concepts

- **Mentality - a** collective characteristic mindset that determines how a body of individuals react to situations and others not of their set
- **People** - a body of persons living in the same country under one national government; a nationality
- **Civilization** is the cooperation of large groups of people not only to survive but to maximize comfort and productivity; a society in an advanced state of social development
- **Ethnos** - people of the same race or nationality who share a distinctive culture
- **National character** – human characteristics that are common or standardised in a given society, modal personality structure
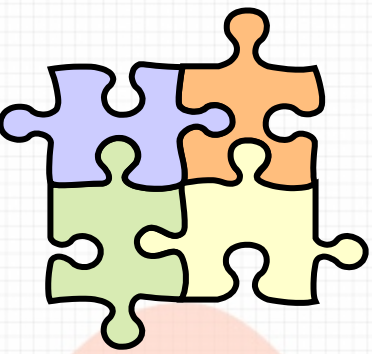
RACE

- local geographic or global human population distinguished as a more or less distinct group by genetically transmitted physical characteristics.
- A group of people united or classified together on the basis of common history, nationality, or geographic distribution: *the German race.*
- A genealogical line; a lineage.
- Humans considered as a group

Race is "a division of a species that differs from other divisions by the frequency with which certain hereditary traits appear among its members." The physical features commonly seen as indicating race are salient visual traits such as **skin color**, **body** or **facial features** and **hair texture**

Picture of the world (PW)

- 19-20 c G.Getz and M.Plank –*physical* PW is the result of world science development

- 20 c in *philosophy*: PW is the result of all spiritual activity of a man which emerges in the course of his interaction with the environment, conceptual PW is a system of knowledge about the world

- In *linguistics*: dates to Humboldt's idea that "language is the reflection of cultural PW" and the theory of linguistic relativity (Sapir and Worf)

Intercultural communication

Intercultural, cross-cultural, transcultural and countercultural (communication) –communication of language personalities that belong to different linguistic and cultural communities.

As a science, it is an interdisciplinary and applied realm of knowledge

Methodology of intercultural psychology

- **Principle of determinism (S.L.Rubinstein 1930s)**

- **Activity approach (A.N.Leontiev)**

- **Cultural and historical development (L.S.Vygotsky)**

- **Principle of interiorization (E.Durkheim and J.Piaget)**

- **Informational theory of ethnos**

Genesis of intercultural psychology

- 1748 David Hume essay "Of National Characters" and *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1740
- 1791 Johann Herder *Ideas upon Philosophy and the History of Mankind* and *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1772)
- 1836 Wilhelm von Gumboldt *The Heterogeneity of Language and its Influence on the Intellectual Development of Mankind*
- 1859 H. Steintal and M. Lazarus *Völkerpsychologie*
- 1894 Gustave le Bon *The Psychology of Peoples* 1896 *The Crowd: the study of the popular mind*

PERSONAE of intercultural psychology

- 1895 Russia I.Yandzhul *From Peoples' Psychology*
- 1910 *F. Boas, M. Mead, R. Benedict* – US school "Culture and Personality" studying models of culture, specifics of thought, behavior and emotions in different cultures
- 1922-1927 *Gustav Shpet* Ethnic Psychology course in Moscow State University
- 1920s *Leo Vygotsky* transethnic analysis of psychic activity of representatives of primitive and developed cultures
- 1925 **Bogarduss scale** to measure ethnic prejudice
- 1939 *A.Cardiner and R.Linton* basic personality structure
- After World War 2, Germany - Gestalt psychology *Durkheim and Levi-Brul* in France study specific forms of human consciousness and their mediation via cultural symbols

History of intercultural psychology

1946 USA anthropologist Edward Hall became the Director of the International Service Institute

1958 book by E.Hall and D.Tragir *Culture as Communication* first mentions the term **intercultural communication**

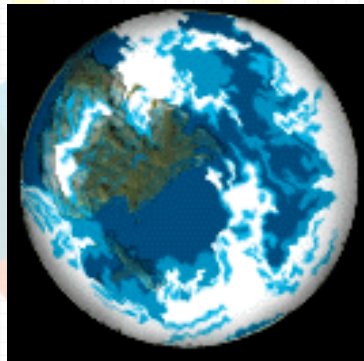1959 E.Hall «*Silent Language*», where he explains the links between culture and communication

The 1960s - **intercultural communication** is a course in US school and university curricula
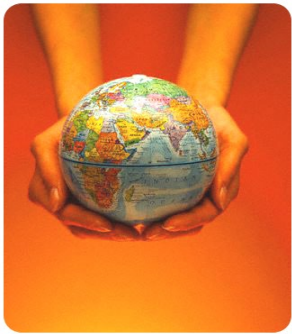
1961 – D.Barkov, Le Vin – psychological anthropology

Hallmarks of cross-cultural research

- 1973 – 1125 personalities in Directory of Cross-cultural Research and Researchers
- International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology (1972)
- Society for Cross-Cultural Research(1972)
- Journal of Cross-Cultural psychology(1970)
- Ethos (1972)
- International Journal of Intercultural Relations (1978)

Modern state of intercultural psychology

- *Testing* of psychological theories based on the facts obtained in one culture and *applying* them to facts in another culture Whitings-1968,Dowson-1971,Seagull-1990

- *Research* into ethnic and psychological characteristics of different cultures Berry, Deysen1974

- Linguistic picture of the world: Gachev, Shmelev and Apresyan

- USA: Triandis, Brislin, Gudykunst

- GB: Peabody, Yagoda

- Netherlands: Hofstede, Trompenaars

- Russia: Bromley, Arutyunian, Drobizheva, Soldatova, Lebedeva,Kochetkov

- Ukraine: Gnatenko, Pavlenko, Stefanenko

The field of **inter-cultural communication** focuses on interactions between people of different cultures.

It is an exciting field that continuously invites us to reflect on our own lives and our relationship with each other on this earth.