



University of  
South Australia

Research Centre for  
Languages  
and Cultures

# Developing English Language and Intercultural Learning Capabilities

## Case Study 2: The Intercultural Learning Project

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### **Research Centre for Languages and Cultures**

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## Executive Summary of Intercultural Learning Project, Case Study 2

### Findings and recommendations

This study explored the experience of a group of students (local and international) and teachers during their participation in a core undergraduate course at the University of South Australia (UniSA). The 530 students were enrolled in diverse programs at a university which is in itself characterised by a high level of diversity. To capture their experience of learning, teaching and assessment in such a highly diverse environment, a research dimension was introduced and data were collected over the entire life cycle of the course. The data sets included interviews with students and teachers, students' written assessments, and observations of weekly teaching staff meetings. The design was collaborative, ethnographic and thematic (Cresswell 2007), involving the research team, members of the teaching staff and members of the university's learning and teaching unit.

The overarching finding of the study is that there is a need to rethink notions of 'experience' and 'engagement', specifically to attend to the central role of language/s and culture/s in all students' experience of learning, teaching and assessment if we are to enable students to develop their intercultural learning capabilities.

In relation to language, culture and learning:

1. That an attentiveness to the crucial role of language/s and culture/s in shaping how concepts are interpreted and how understandings and new knowledge are created, developed and applied is necessary and valuable when learning and teaching in diversity.

In relation to learners, the experience of learning and the personalisation of their learning:

2. That students' intercultural learning capabilities are developed through opportunities for experiential and personalised learning in interaction, in which students engage with their own and others' diverse knowledges, experiences and understandings and participate reciprocally in exchange.

In relation to curriculum design:

3. That the design of the curriculum be coherent in the sense that intercultural learning as described permeates all aspects of the curriculum and its enactment.

In relation to managing a core course:

4. That coordination extends beyond the administrative aspects of 'managing' the course to include *developing shared understandings* of the conceptualisation and design of the content and processes of the course, teaching and learning processes, experiences and resources, and assessment and evaluation.

In relation to academic and professional literacies:

5. That attending deliberately and explicitly to language/s and culture/s is an integral part of developing the literate capabilities students need in academic and professional environments.



The findings reveal the need for and value of:

- enabling students to draw on their linguistic, cultural and knowledge repertoires
- providing coherent and scaffolded pathways for students as they participate in a course
- enabling opportunities for experiential and personalised learning through interaction, in which students engage with their own and others' diverse knowledges, experiences and understandings and participate reciprocally in exchange
- enabling students to examine critically their own and others' assumptions, to consider multiple perspectives, and reflect on the interpretation, creation and application of knowledge
- attending to the crucial role of language/s and culture/s in developing, enacting and evaluating the processes of learning, teaching and assessment.

The findings imply that learning, teaching and assessment in diversity:

- is a shared, dialogic and ongoing process involving both teachers and students as they engage with disciplinary knowledge and consider how it may be applied in meaningful and relevant ways
- requires an attentiveness to the crucial role of language/s and culture/s in shaping how understandings and new knowledge are created, developed and applied.

## Recommendations

There is a need to support teachers across all disciplines to develop a deliberate focus on how to:

- understand within and across disciplines the crucial role of language/s and culture/s in learning for diverse students and teachers and encourage students to draw on their linguistic and cultural repertoires
- use experiential and personalised learning that engages students in peer-to-peer collaboration in order to exchange, interpret and create new knowledge
- create opportunities for students to reflect on and reflexively respond to their own and others' understandings of themselves/others in diversity through a coherent curriculum design in which intercultural learning permeates all aspects of the course
- provide linguistic and conceptual scaffolding in learning, teaching, assessment and feedback to students to provide coherent learning pathways
- develop among teachers shared understandings and approaches to learning, teaching and assessment through dialogue, collaboration and reflexivity during the life of a course.
- understand within and across disciplines the role of language/s and culture/s in developing academic and professional literacies for diverse students

# Chapter 1 Introduction and context

## 1.1 Introduction

The 21st century is a time of accelerating multiculturalism and multilingualism (May 2014). It is characterised by an intensification of the global movement of people, ideas/knowledge, products, images, messages and technologies (Appadurai 1996), in which increasing numbers of people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds routinely interact with each other (Pauwels 2000).

Knight (2004) identified over a decade ago the need for higher education to respond to these changes, and in particular how to 'deal' with the intersect of the 'international' and the 'intercultural' in teaching and learning. This intersect is currently understood most frequently as supplementary structures, systems or methods, that is, the provision of particular kinds of foods in cafeterias, or the provision of spaces for religious practices, and as an additive process of curriculum development that might include the addition of a case study from a different cultural context, or a study-abroad experience. Valuable though all these provisions are, they neither adequately address the nature of learning in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity, nor sufficiently engage with the nexus of languages, cultures, and ways of learning and knowing that such diversity brings to teaching and learning (Liddicoat & Scarino 2013).

The present teaching and learning study focused on students' experience and engagement in a core undergraduate course: Intercultural Communication. In addition to the regular offering of the course, a parallel research process examined more closely the nature of the experience of learning and teaching on the part of all participants – both students and lecturers/tutors. The research dimension was undertaken collaboratively by a research team who were familiar with the course. Two members of the Learning and Teaching Unit participated in many discussions and developed a learning resource on referencing tailored specifically to the course. The research also benefitted from discussion with the research team associated with the overarching project: Developing English Language and Intercultural Learning Capabilities (of which this project is Case Study 2), and from the project reference group. The context, focus, the collaborative processes of this teaching and learning study and its findings are described below.

## 1.2 Context

### 1.2.1. The course

Intercultural Communication is a core course of the undergraduate programs within the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages (CIL).

This course was chosen as the focus of the case study because it:

- is a core course with a large and diverse number of students and, as such, it offers students the opportunity to interact in learning, in their diversity
- focuses specifically on intercultural communication
- invites teaching and learning approaches that capitalise on students' opportunities for intercultural exchange
- is a first year course, is among the first courses that most students in the relevant programs undertake, and has a deliberate focus on developing students' academic language and literacies.

The overarching goal of the course is to develop students' ability to become effective intercultural communicators. This aligns with UniSA's *Crossing the horizon* strategy of creating globally capable students. The course was intentionally framed as an invitation to students to explore collaboratively, from the starting point of their existing knowledge, experience and understanding, and using their own linguistic and cultural resources, the field of study known as 'intercultural communication'. As intercultural communication is the subject matter of the course, it takes an intercultural orientation to teaching and learning, specifically highlighting the experience of intercultural communication and participation in reciprocal exchange, reflection and reflexivity. This intercultural orientation to teaching and learning, described below as 'intercultural learning', is an orientation that applies to learning in any discipline and course offered in the many and diverse programs of the university. In the present case study, the intercultural was both the subject matter of the course and the fundamental characteristic of the orientation to inquiry and learning. This aligns with UniSA's focus on student engagement and experiential learning.

The programs for which this is a core course are the Bachelor of Arts, The Bachelor of Communication and Media, the Bachelor of Journalism and Professional Writing and the Bachelor of Media Arts. As a core undergraduate course undertaken by a large cohort of mainly first year students, another important course goal is to help students adjust to what for them is a whole new world, university life, with a particular focus on developing capabilities in communication, including academic literacies. With this in mind, there is a strong focus throughout the course on helping students to participate confidently in academic culture, and to equip them with the language and literacies that will enable them to successfully meet the course objectives (see Figure 1.1), and beyond that, their diverse programs. As the course coordinator explained in a briefing to tutors in the first teaching staff meeting before the course commenced, this involves first and foremost, making students feel welcome:

And the position of the students on the first day, we need to try and put ourselves in their shoes, not their shoes exactly, but more look at what's going on from their point of view. Their understanding of it. The first priority is to get people to feel at home on the course. The next priority is to get people familiar with what needs to be done, and the third point is, to start off the conversation that will continue throughout the course, around ... its core focus.

Key to enhancing student engagement and experience is foregrounding the perspective of the students.

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

- CO1. demonstrate an understanding of themselves in relation to their own and others' cultures
- CO2. identify cultural and linguistic factors which influence social and professional communication in intercultural contexts
- CO3. evaluate how people construct and negotiate meaning in intercultural communication
- CO4. demonstrate an ability to manage their communication effectively in intercultural communication

Figure 1.1: Course objectives

In 2015, the course was organised in such a way that each week in the lectures and tutorials, students were invited to follow a line of inquiry through a sequence of 'guiding ideas' (Weeks 1 – 6), which they would then explore in relation to various examples in the second half of the course (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Course structure

Week	Guiding ideas
1	Understanding intercultural communication
2	How do we make sense of ourselves/others?
3	How is the contemporary world linguistically and culturally diverse?
4	How do we categorise/stereotype each other?
5	How do we interact within and across borders?
6	Intercultural communication in learning
7	France, diversities and the Banlieues
8	Intercultural communication in the professions
9	Public holiday (students prepared essay plans)
10	Kaurna: Reclaiming language as intercultural communication
11	Religious diversities and intercultural communication
12	What next?
13	Essay preparation (no lecture this week)

In this structure each guiding idea is kept in play from one week to the next across the lectures, course readings and tutorials. From Week 7 these guiding ideas are explored in relation to certain instantiations of diversity, such as *les Banlieues* in France, or religious diversities in Australia. From the perspective of the teaching staff, it is important that the students are able to see how each aspect of the course contributes to the whole, that there is a sense of progression from the general to the specific in a way that is meaningful to students as they work towards particular academic and professional goals. Whereas the second half of the course invites students to explore intercultural communication in specific contexts or in relation to particular kinds of diversity in the lectures and the course readings, in the tutorials students are invited to explore intercultural communication beyond these contexts, to make connections with other contexts that are relevant to them, and to share their knowledge and experience. This will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

### 1.2.2 The students

In 2015, 530 undergraduate students were enrolled in the course. In addition to those undertaking programs in the School of Communication, International Studies and Languages (CIL) and courses as varied as Journalism, Media Arts, History, Sociology, International Relations or Applied Linguistics and Languages, the cohort included students from disciplines beyond those represented in CIL programs, including Social Work and Law. Although there were no data profiling domestic students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, teaching staff noted that there were significant numbers of multilingual students, including 26 international students, as well as students from migrant and refugee backgrounds, for all of whom English was an additional language. This meant that the students undertaking the course reflected the high degree of diversity found in across the university more broadly.

### 1.2.3 The teachers

The teaching staff included two course coordinators and ten tutors. The disciplinary backgrounds of the tutors were varied and represented the fields of languages and linguistics, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies and film studies. Seven of the tutors were PhD students who brought with them their particular areas of interest in these diverse disciplines. Three of the tutors were international students for whom English was an additional language, and two tutors and one course coordinator were of multilingual, migrant background. In addition, there were four guest lecturers from different disciplines. Here again, we can see that the teaching team were very much a

reflection of the disciplinary, linguistic and cultural diversity found more broadly across the teaching team of the university.

#### 1.2.4 Intercultural learning

Intercultural learning is best described as an orientation to teaching and learning that begins with an appreciation of the linguistic and cultural diversities that the participants (students and lecturers/tutors) bring to learning. It recognises that students and teachers are situated in the linguistic, cultural and knowledge system/s of their primary and ongoing socialisation and that this situatedness shapes the way they engage, experience, interpret, create and exchange meanings in learning.

The upshot is that in intercultural learning, students' language/s and culture/s are central to their experience in and of learning. Indeed, Halliday (1993) sees language as 'the foundation of learning itself' and that '[t]he distinctive characteristic of human learning is that it is a process of meaning making'. This statement highlights the fact that it is through language that teachers and students and students and student-peers – in their linguistic and cultural diversity – interact to exchange knowledge and perspectives, connect ideas and concepts, and make sense of, explain, elaborate and exchange meanings as processes which are integral to learning. In other words, learning in all disciplines and across disciplines is mediated through the language/s and culture/s available in the learners' repertoires, both of their primary socialisation and those that are learnt subsequently through education. This means that learning needs to be understood as more than the acquisition of knowledge (learning and knowing *that*) and as more than the participation in the use of knowledge (knowing *how*) (see Sfard 1998). As Scarino (2014) elaborated:

It needs to be elaborated to highlight how learning, as a process of making sense or coming to understand, involves becoming aware of how learners reciprocally interpret knowledge to others and themselves through their language and culture, and its use with others, and reflect upon the process (p. 390).

Scarino explained that, in this sense, learning can be understood as a process of interpretation, where meanings are not 'given' but need to be discerned; as reflection on the process of interpretation, learning and knowing; and as reflexive in the sense of connecting the learning and knowing to oneself as learner and knower.

What is relevant here is learners' histories and trajectories of experiences in their cultural lives and in education, and their past and present participation in learning, because these form the essential interpretive resources that learners draw upon in learning. Students whose trajectories of experiences were formed in cultural contexts that are different from the dominant one will necessarily draw on their prior knowledge, ways of knowing and cultural experiences that are derived from their early socialisation in their first language/s and culture/s. At the same time, they will seek to draw upon their gradual and evolving socialisation in education in Australia. Although their medium of instruction and language of learning is now different than that which mediated their prior learning, they will draw upon their entire linguistic repertoires to interpret knowledge and create new knowledge. In this way, the present learning of these students will necessarily draw upon the totality of their established and developing linguistic, cultural and knowledge resources, and they should be encouraged to do this. Australian students' current learning is also mediated through their prior experiences of learning and language and culture, although these linguistic, cultural and knowledge systems may be the same as the dominant medium of instruction in education. By learning to listen to and engage with the experiences and knowledge of fellow students who are



learning across diverse linguistic, cultural and knowledge systems, they too begin to appreciate commonalities and differences in knowledge and ways of knowing in diversity.

Teachers too are sociocultural beings. As Goodson (2008, p. 69) states, '...in understanding something so intensely personal as teaching it is crucial that we know about the person the teacher is.' In other words, teachers, too, bring their language/s, culture/s and knowledge systems to the act of teaching and learning.

Intercultural learning involves processes of participating and engaging with knowledges in diversity. It includes understanding the way in which language/s and culture/s come into play in the exchange of both meanings and knowledge in learning. It also includes consideration of one's own and others' assumptions, comparisons, reactions and responses. Finally, it involves reflection on the knowledge and processes related to the course as well as one's own knowledge, perceptions and values in relation to others in order to develop one's own understandings, ways of knowing and seeing. In this way students develop their capability as learners through a meta-awareness about learning and their own self-awareness as learners.

For all learners and teachers, the process of learning in the context of the linguistic and cultural diversity of contemporary education is intercultural. Intercultural learning involves:

- recognising that learning across all disciplines is a social, linguistic and cultural act that involves interaction
- exchanging knowledge/creating new knowledge through dialogue, understood as a process through which to negotiate the interpretation and construction of meaning
- appreciating that people (self and other; learners and teachers) are situated in their linguistic, cultural and experiential contexts – meanings and values originate in the language, culture and knowledge systems to which people belong and this provides the basis for new learning
- the questioning of assumptions, positionality, stance, bases, origins, etc.
- recognising the processes of learning as reciprocal
- reflection on knowledge, knowing and reflectivity in relation to self as knower.

The processes that develop intercultural learning capabilities include:

- participating in the experience of exchanging knowledge and meanings in diversity
- making comparisons across knowledge systems
- considering multiple perspectives and diverse ways of knowing, as well as diverse responses and reactions
- understanding the linguistic and cultural situatedness of knowledge
- critically examining assumptions
- reflecting on the interpretation, creation and use of knowledge and one's own knowledge, understanding and values
- developing self-awareness.

It is the potential for a course to develop these capabilities that was the focus of the study reported here.

## Chapter 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Design

In line with participatory action research, the research team and teaching staff drew on a collaborative approach (Cresswell 2007) to:

1. identify how students interact in their diversity
2. identify how teaching strategies, regular course activities and assessment tasks capitalise on students' opportunities for sharing knowledge across disciplines, languages and cultures, and enhance the development of their disciplinary knowledge, as well as language, literacy and intercultural learning capabilities
3. reflect on and discuss implications for teaching and learning strategies in the instance of this core course, and more broadly for courses offered by the Division.

Taking the question: *How do students (both domestic and international) and teaching staff draw on and develop their linguistic and cultural resources and intercultural capabilities in a core course of a degree program?* this case study set out to explore how:

- students interact in their linguistic and cultural diversity
- teaching and learning strategies capitalise on students' opportunities for intercultural engagement, participation and exchange in particular disciplines
- students' intercultural learning capabilities can be enhanced
- students engage with learning experiences and resources
- teaching and learning strategies enhance the development of students' language and literacies (academic and professional).

The focus of the project was to be sensitive to the language-rich nature of teaching and learning in the Division of EASS. It would draw on the resources of the Learning and Teaching Unit (LTU), and it was intended that it be portable across the Division and potentially to other parts of the university.

### 2.2 Participants

Students and teaching staff were invited by the research team to participate in the project. Although all teaching staff were involved in the project by participating in the regular weekly teaching meetings, three tutors and one course co-ordinator participated in face-to-face interviews throughout the semester-long duration of the project. Two of the tutors were PhD students, one was a domestic student whose doctoral research was in the field of applied linguistics, and one was an international student whose doctoral research was in the field of anthropology. The course co-ordinator and the third tutor, who had been involved with the course for seven and four years respectively, were also members of the research team, and therefore had dual roles in the process of collaboration.

### 2.3 The process of collaboration

The research team of three included (1) Angela Scarino, a researcher who had previously lectured and tutored in the course, and whose research interests focus on language and intercultural learning and assessment (2) Jonathan Crichton, the course coordinator, whose research interests focus on how language matters in the professions, and (3) Fiona O'Neill, one of the course tutors, whose research interests focus on language learning and multilingual professionals. The research process

overlayed, and was totally integrated into, the regular teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation processes of the course. The research team worked collaboratively with the teaching staff team through a facilitated process of ongoing dialogue, development and exploration, to (1) follow the whole life cycle of the course, and (2) identify opportunities for intercultural experience and engagement, and for developing language and literacies through regular course activities and assessment assignments.

Data were gathered through participation in regular teaching staff meetings and interviews, all of which were audio-recorded and transcribed. These meetings and interviews took the form of conversations with both teaching staff and participating students, to explore their understandings of how knowledge, regular course experiences, teaching and learning strategies, and assessment assignments contributed to developing students' intercultural learning capabilities and academic and professional language and literacies. In collaboration with teaching staff the researchers also collected and analysed data in the form of participating students' written texts, which included a literature review and an essay, and conducted focus group and individual interviews with 18 student participants, both domestic and international. A summary of the data sets is provided in Table 2.1.

*Table 2.1: Case study 2 data sets*

Teaching staff meetings	10 routine weekly teaching staff meetings. 5 weekly external tutor meetings.
Teaching staff interviews	2 course co-ordinators interviewed together to document the ways in which the course had changed and developed over time.  3 tutors interviewed (a total of 6 interviews) about their experience of teaching the course.
Student interviews	18 students interviewed about their experience of the course (one international student, three domestic students of multilingual/migrant background, and 16 domestic students who identified as Anglo-Australian).
Students' written texts (review and essay)	33 participating students (seven international students and 26 domestic students)

As the study involved audio-recording interviews with teaching staff and collecting students' written texts, both teaching staff and students were provided with the relevant participant information sheets and consent forms to obtain their written permission, in line with the UniSA Human Research Ethics protocols. Participants' names have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Before turning to a discussion of the data and the findings, the next chapter will give an overview of how the teaching and learning orientation of the course has changed over the past eight years and in particular in 2015, and the rationale for these changes.

## Chapter 3 Development of the course

### 3.1 A brief history

The courses Intercultural Communication was introduced in 2006. It was first offered as a core first-year course within the Linguistic major of the BA (Languages and Intercultural Communication). It was also a required course within the BA (International Studies) and available as a university-wide elective.

Each year since, changes have been made according to the needs of the student cohort, and student and teaching staff feedback. These changes have included updating the readings, adjusting lecture content, and refining tutorial materials. The most significant change was made in 2015 in conjunction with the research study. This was the culmination of developments over the previous years.

From 2011, increasing numbers of students were taking the course as an elective, adding to the disciplinary, linguistic and cultural diversity among students in the course. In effect, the student cohort was becoming more representative of the diversity among students in the university as a whole and the community more generally. At the same time, among some students there had been a perception, revealed primarily through course evaluations, that the course was ‘telling the students what to think’: asking them to judge others, and by implication themselves, in particular ways. Allied to this perception of a prescriptive orientation, there had also been feedback indicating that the course needed to be more coherent from the students’ perspective, and to speak more directly to the lives and interests of the range of students in the course. The upshot was that the course needed to be revised so that teaching and learning engaged more effectively with the diversity of the experiences that students brought to their participation in the course and to develop further the experiential dimension of the course.

The first attempt to revise the course shifted the emphasis of the course from a survey of disciplinary perspectives on intercultural communication – including linguistics, sociology, multilingual and diversity studies, and business – to an invitation to students to discover and explore, in light of these perspectives, ‘sites’ involving intercultural communication that they selected as relevant to their own lives. This led to the restructuring of course themes and lectures. The first five weeks of the course introduced and developed this notion of ‘site’, with subsequent guest lectures that exemplified participation in such sites – each one an instantiation of linguistic and cultural diversity and ways of engaging with this diversity – and a focus in the readings and assignments on researching and exploring these sites. The first part of the course now comprised five weeks of lectures that provide a conceptual framing, drawing on key, ‘guiding’ ideas selected from the literature to enable students to consider what intercultural communication might mean at sites in own lives and to enable them to understand themselves as examples of linguistic and cultural diversity. These key, guiding ideas were:

- Languages and values
- Mobilities
- Categories
- Borders

In the second part of the course, these guiding ideas were exemplified and explored in guest lectures that presented local, national and international sites as case studies in the focus of the course:

- Diasporic sites – the Chinese experience
- Kaurna: Reclaiming language as intercultural communication
- Global diversity: North/South perspectives
- Professional sites – opportunities and challenges for the professions
- National sites – France and the *Banlieues*
- International sites – Islamic identities and the Madrasah

Following these changes, student feedback was largely positive and the course became increasingly popular, the number of students growing by around 20 per cent each year until 2014. In 2015, the course ran for the first time as a core course in the undergraduate programs within CIL (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Communication and Media, Bachelor of Journalism and Professional Writing, Bachelor of Media Arts) and in the program at the South Australian Institute of Business and Technology (SAIBT).

However, a deeper revision was needed, one that required rethinking what ‘engagement’ and ‘student experience’ might mean. Feedback from tutors in particular had made it clear by 2014 that students still found it difficult to bring together the disciplinary content and examples of sites in a way that would draw on and benefitted their own experience. It was clear that the course still was not effectively enabling students to participate in experiencing and learning from the course content in and through the diversity of their own lives. There was in effect a ‘hole in the middle’ of the course because it left too much to the students in working out what intercultural communication meant at these sites.

### 3.2 A conceptual shift – from ‘site’ to student experience

The reorientation of the course needed to address a conceptual and a practical question: What are ‘engagement’ and ‘the student experience’ to mean in contexts of linguistic and cultural diversity? And how are teaching and learning to engage with this diversity of student experience? Addressing these questions required, in 2015, shifting from the focus on sites to foregrounding student’s diverse ways of understanding the subject matter, their knowledge and their experience of the course during it and on its completion.

The reason for the changes was that tutor and student evaluation feedback, and students’ assignments, had revealed that the emphasis on identifying and analysing sites had focused on the context or setting rather than the act of intercultural communication, and it had reduced students to ‘observers’. This posed a problem for – and in fact stood in the way of – their learning, specifically their development of intercultural communication. The focus on sites was in this sense an obstacle to learning because it required from students an ‘objectified’ understanding that ‘matched’ the key ideas on the course to the sites. This effectively objectified and homogenised the students themselves, making their diversity invisible by ruling out the diverse linguistic and cultural understandings by which any students make sense of their experience. In other words, though it provided case studies for analysis and yielded material that was of interest to many students, the emphasis on sites as an object of study ensured that the course fell short of inviting students to experience intercultural communication in diverse contexts, including those within their own experience: in other words, of engaging with the diversity of student experience.

This reorientation of the student experience has been Copernican and remains a work in progress. To create the conditions for intercultural communication it is not sufficient to acknowledge the presence of diversity; it must be made central to teaching and learning. More than this, it requires a

radically different slant on knowledge within a course, on the informing disciplines and on the disciplines more generally, because it foregrounds the diversity of background understandings that all students bring – their subjectivity – and turns these ways of understanding into the focus and key teaching and learning resource of the course.

Key to the shift has been an orientation to knowledges, reflection and reflexivity in teaching, learning and assessment among staff and students. The use of the plural ‘knowledges’ in describing this shift acknowledges that linguistic and cultural diversity entails epistemological diversity: in effect, different ways of knowing and seeing the world on the part of the observers and observed. Here, reflection refers to consideration and a developing awareness of the usually taken for granted background understandings that inform the individual’s assumptions and dispositions regarding self and others. Reflexivity is the ongoing process of applying this awareness to one’s own actions with, and interpretations of, oneself and others. In other words, reflection without reflexivity is passive; reflexivity without reflection is blind.

Feedback from students and tutors, detailed in the following sections, suggests that this shift has yielded valuable, reciprocal learning in course classes, enabling respect for knowledges, languages and cultures in the whole course, and as a focus within the teaching and learning. Turning the focus onto the student experience – putting this ‘in the first column’ as it were – has revealed each class as the location for diverse knowledges and ‘multiple perspectives’, making them visible and respected in a venue for exploring understandings of the self and others, and mutual understanding.

Reflecting now on the development of the course, we have come some way in recognising within the course that teaching and learning the substance of the course cannot be separated from teaching and learning in linguistic and cultural diversity. Students need to understand the subject matter of a course (which in this case happens to be intercultural communication), as well as their experience of understanding this subject matter, and their experience of this in diversity, and their own reflection on it in diversity, so that it becomes a part of their own knowledge and experiential repertoire. The focus on reflection and reflexivity in the students’ assessment experience and in the tutorials has brought us closer to achieving this holistic recognition of teaching and learning in diversity. However, this is not yet reflected in the course as a whole. For example, the course still has some way to go in enabling the linguistic and cultural diversity of students, in particular their own ways of knowing and seeing the subject matter of the course, to become apparent to the students themselves, and in developing this as part of their own knowledge and experiential repertoire.

The following sections trace how this shift was accomplished through teaching, learning and assessment within the course, how this involved an orientation to reflection and reflexivity, and how students and tutors responded to this orientation.



## Chapter 4 Managing the course

### 4.1 An integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment

An integrated approach is taken in this course towards (1) the teaching and learning of course content, inviting students to experience intercultural communication as the substance of the course, and (2) the development of students' language and academic literacies. This is accomplished through intercultural learning processes. This section will first consider how this is managed through the organisation of lectures and related tutorials; weekly teaching staff meetings during which the tutors and course coordinator discuss conceptual and academic literacy scaffolding; and the approach to assessments, moderation and feedback.

#### 4.1.1 Lectures and tutorials

Each week a guiding idea in relation to the course topic is presented in the lecture and then taken up in discussion in the tutorials. This sequencing of ideas provides conceptual scaffolding for students, that is, a conceptual framework on which they can build and develop their understanding of the topic, which in this case is intercultural communication. A key strategy is that a guiding idea is not visited once, but kept in play throughout the course in the lectures, tutorials, readings and assessment tasks. In order to do this, a language or vocabulary for talking about course concepts such as 'linguistic and cultural diversity', 'registers', 'membership categorisation devices' and 'soft borders', is provided in the lectures and the course readings and used in the tutorials, providing the students with linguistic scaffolding with which to better articulate their developing knowledge. This enables students to articulate their ideas in tutorial discussions and assessment tasks. For example, students are introduced to the concept of 'membership categorisation devices' in the lecture and the course reading in week 4. This is taken up in discussions in the tutorial group following the lecture, where students are invited to discuss how the ideas in the weekly reading and lecture have contributed to their understandings of this concept and how they could relate it to real life examples that are meaningful and relevant to them. Before turning to consider how tutors manage this in class, it is worth reviewing interview extracts of tutor and student perspectives on this conceptual and linguistic scaffolding (Figure 4.1). These comments from tutors and students illustrate how coherence is accomplished through conceptual and linguistic scaffolding, and how this scaffolding is evaluated.

Extract A illustrates how tutors prioritise getting to know the students beyond simply developing a rapport with them. This involves learning about students' linguistic and cultural repertoires, their knowledge and experience, learning of their discipline, their part-time work, their professional goals and their interests. Tutors place value on giving students opportunities in every tutorial to talk in small groups about concepts and terms they have met in the lectures and the course readings, as illustrated in extract B. Tutors give students time to talk, listen to what they say, and ask questions to encourage them to explore their developing understandings. The rationale for this is to enable students to practise using the terminology of the subject matter of the course and to test their understandings of concepts presented in the lectures and course readings. This is also an opportunity for students to draw on their own knowledge systems and share their understandings, knowledge and experience with others, so both students and tutors participate to 'bridge that gap', in other words, to mediate one another's understandings.

Figure 4.1: Perspectives on an integrated approach to teaching and learning: Conceptual and linguistic scaffolding (interview extracts)

Teacher perspectives	Student perspectives
<p>A. I think the tutorials are really important because it's in the tutorials that we have <i>an opportunity to actually bring the abstract ideas from the lectures together and to try and make sense of it</i>. So for me that's what I try to do, that's my ultimate goal in the tutorials to try and get the students to <i>bridge that gap between their own experiences and these kind of snooty, dusty academic things</i> that we're presenting to them. In saying that though, that's difficult, I feel that <i>you really have to know the students quite well</i> and the first couple of weeks I just try to really <i>develop a rapport</i> with them. <i>Learning their first names, trying to get them to show a little bit of themselves to me, things that are important to them</i>. Through doing that I try to get them, <i>I prompt them in that way to try and make connections</i>. (Tutor, Australian)</p>	<p>C. The thing that I have drawn from it a lot is, <i>I am really critical of what I see and hear</i>. And you start thinking 'Oh! That's membership categorisation!' and most of the time I'm yelling at the television set. <i>Really noticing how, in a much more critical way, of what's being said and how it's being said, and how things are being portrayed</i>. Through the media, what politicians are saying, what's happening worldwide and how that's all being talked about. And you see that, <i>you see the miscommunication between cultures, and assumptions being made, and the way the language is used</i>. That's the thing I've got a lot out of this, and I'm now super-critical of everything. You think '<i>Hang on, that's just an envelope that you've put there, but that doesn't actually explain it</i>'. (Domestic student)</p> <p>D. I think it was week 2 we talked about, or week 1 maybe, and we talked about '<i>What is culture?</i>' and that was <i>mind-blowing</i>. Yeah, it just got me thinking. In our group we talked about '<i>What is culture?</i>' Culture can literally be anything. And that just got into my mind. (Domestic student, multilingual, migrant)</p>
<p>B. When <i>I put them in groups</i> and I'm like, 'Go!' and one of the first things I hear everyone say, like yesterday, it was like, 'I wonder what 'mobility' was, what's that again? How do we talk about that?' And someone was like '<i>Look, this is how I understand it</i>' and someone was, I could hear someone else say, 'Was that really 'categorisation'?' <i>Because if it's just you talking all the time, they don't have an opportunity to test their understandings</i>. I think <i>the little group thing is really good</i> and I just move around and <i>listen to them and ask them questions</i>, see how they're going with it. (Tutor, Australian)</p>	<p>E. <i>I think the course has definitely expanded the vocabulary and the ideas I can use to explain things</i> like this. Because a lot of social aspects, people just go into auto pilot and just do, and they don't really consider the meanings, how they all fit in behind things. And that's another thing that intercultural communication does, <i>it gives you a broader sense, context for why we interact the way we do...</i> So things like 'registers', I find that particular idea fits into a lot of previous ideas that I've had. <i>It's given me a way to express it</i>. I can be like 'This is what it is', and that's sort of how I've been thinking of it, but not in a way that's so succinct... I think <i>this course has really helped me expand on some of the language that I use to describe these things</i>. (Domestic student, Australian)</p>

Extract C illustrates how students take the conceptual framework of the course that is provided and begin to notice how these concepts are instantiated in their worlds. This extract also highlights

students' developing awareness of the learned assumptions that are brought to interpretations of a phenomenon. In other words, students learn how such ideas apply in profound ways in their everyday interactions, both real and virtual. For many students, the opportunity provided in tutorials to make connections between academic concepts and their own knowledge and experience can be a defining moment, as extract D highlights. This extract also shows how, through the small group discussions in tutorials, students develop an awareness that one cannot assume that terms have the same meanings across disciplines, knowledges or knowledge systems, languages and cultures. In eliciting diverse understandings from students in tutorials, students begin to notice their own and one another's responses and reactions, and develop an awareness that there are always multiple interpretations and perspectives in play. In taking an approach that encourages discussion and sharing of understandings amongst students from diverse backgrounds, tutors highlight how knowledge is linguistically and culturally situated. Extract E highlights how the linguistic scaffolding of the course develops students' capabilities for articulating ideas encountered and explored during the course.

In addition to providing a conceptual framework and a vocabulary for talking about key concepts introduced in the course, further scaffolding is provided for students so they can explore these concepts in graduated ways. This is accomplished through processes that build on their existing knowledge and expertise in both ways that are meaningful and relevant to their discipline and in their social and professional lives. For this reason, the course invites students to draw on their own experiences in tutorial discussions and in the assessments. The aim here is to encourage *personalisation* and *experiential learning*. This requires a relational rather than simply transactional approach to teaching and learning, and is accomplished by tutors, as tutorial classes become facilitated conversations in which tutors and students are 'partners in learning' or co-learners (Garcia & Li Wei 2014). Taking the starting point that students are already members of multiple social, cultural and workplace cultures and diverse disciplines, tutors elicit examples from students of how they navigate diverse languages, cultures and knowledge systems in their day to day lives, and encourage students to make connections between their existing knowledge and experience and the subject matter of the course. The following extract highlights how tutors go about doing this:

Definitely, but *I try not to pick on them*, because the big point that I want to make is that you don't necessarily need to have jumped on a plane or be from some exotic place to be able to do or have done, intercultural communication. I think *it's easier to demonstrate when you start using examples* of social media and stuff like that, for the younger generation especially, and that's the other thing, you start trying to *prompt* them in places where you guess they might have had those experiences. Maybe at school with different kinds of exchanges and things, and how culture might have been presented to them before, and at work. The first couple of weeks you get a lot of examples, where there's conflict, situations where something went wrong, and that's when I noticed, 'That person is not like me!' What I really try, so *I don't jump on them right away, because I just want them to be open to sharing experiences*, but definitely in the last two weeks I've been trying to get them to move away from that kind of 'This is a situation where something went wrong, and it was definitely about this *thing* called different languages and cultures'. (Tutor, Australian)

Foregrounding students' experiences and valuing their knowledge and expertise in this way creates opportunities for peer-to-peer learning as students discuss what is meaningful and relevant to them in relation to key course ideas, and they are able to help one another make connections between course content and their own experience. This approach gives recognition to the reality that students bring to learning their own knowledges and ways of knowing and being. To this end, tutors facilitate small group discussions supported by guided reading questions (see Figure 4.2) for the

weekly reading and guiding ideas. They encourage students to draw on their own understandings and linguistic and cultural resources to make sense of subject matter, to make connections with their own experiences of intercultural communication, and to reflect on how these ideas matter to them personally and more broadly in their social and professional worlds. The rationale for this is to provide processual scaffolding for students, to help them integrate new knowledge in manageable and meaningful ways, which prepares them for the assessments, as the following comment by the course coordinator in a meeting to brief tutors illustrates:

The reading questions mirror what the students need to do for the first assignment, a potential structure, these questions map on to the assessment task, this is to support students in preparing for [Assessment #1] the Review, as they discuss the key ideas during the tutorial. (Course coordinator)

Figure 4.2: Guided reading questions for tutorials (Week 2: How do we make sense of ourselves and others?)

1. According to Blommaert (2013), what are the two forces that have re-shaped social life around the world?
2. What 'problem' does Blommaert (2013) identify?
3. How do you understand 'communicative competence'?
4. How do you understand 'registers'?
5. What do you think Blommaert (2013) means by 'polycentric environment'?
6. For Blommaert (2013), why is the traditional notion of 'citizenship' problematic?

In facilitating students' learning through engagement with the course's guiding ideas, which they encounter through the lectures and the course readings, the tutors invoke several processes to provide scaffolding, as the following interview extracts illustrate:

So getting students to *interact* with one another, and that's very exciting when that happens and you can see them *interacting between each other* and *supporting each other in their understanding*. I do a lot of *small group work*, so two or three, or three or four, I don't want them to get too big because then there'll be the silent people just observing. ... They need time to *test their ideas in small, safe groups*. In the early part of the course, I mix people around frequently, because otherwise if you don't, they'll sit with the same people. (Tutor, Australian, multilingual)

I think a very good way is, now thinking back on it, I did it as well, *showing them that it was safe*, and I showed them that by *talking about myself and not being afraid of sharing my fears*. Because of course for me, English is a second language so every time I talk in the class, I know I'm afraid of making mistakes, they might notice that, but once I felt, *I showed them that I was comfortable in talking about it*, I felt like they were much more welcoming and they were feeling safe about talking about *themselves*. As you said, some students they did not have any experiences abroad or any real intercultural experience from different ethnic backgrounds, and showing them that problems in communication might arise even when we are all talking the same language, from my point of view, made them *reflect on themselves*, and *feel more*

*legitimated* in talking about it as an intercultural experience. (Tutor, International PhD student, multilingual)

So I guess in terms of *their intercultural understandings being valued* in the course activities, I think it's *the right kind of prompting questions*, those 'How?' questions are really important to, *not to lead them too much* either. And that's for my own benefit really, because a lot of the time, *if I just tried to lead them down the path that I already know, then I'm just going to get the same kind of answers, which may just be reflecting what they want me to hear*. Whereas you normally find something a lot *more interesting* from a student if you *ask them more of an open question*. (Tutor, Australian)

*You'd have to kind of recap it*, which in a way was *beneficial for me*, because it's *how you rephrase something* to have it a different way. (Domestic student, Australian)

Firstly, we can see here how tutors reconfigure small groups for discussions, taking as a starting point the reading questions for the weekly course reading that relate to the guiding idea that is presented in the lecture. The rationale for this is to encourage students to rearticulate key ideas to one another in their own words, which tutors see as valuable in developing students' understandings of these concepts as they share and mediate one another's understandings. Tutors comments show how the process of regularly changing the small groups around can be used to manage a perceived issue of students settling into a comfort zone with the same people every week and not being as engaged in the topic of discussion as they might be. What this does not do, however, is allow students for whom English is an additional language to work together in groups and use their shared linguistic and cultural resources to support one another in their learning.

Secondly, notwithstanding this, tutors place a premium on making the classroom a comfortable and safe setting for sharing ideas. The tutors build a rapport with students, getting to know them by name, sharing something of themselves and inviting students to do the same. Naturally this requires a high degree of sensitivity and reflection on the tutors' part, as the following extract highlights:

I don't know, after every lesson I'm like 'Should I have asked that question? How should I have worded that? I hope that person felt alright afterwards' you know what I mean. I think about it a lot. (Tutor, Australian)

In the 2015 iteration of the course, two of the participating tutors taught both internal and online tutorial groups. Their observations highlight a marked difference in the nature of student participation between face-to-face and online classes:

I think this is *really lacking for the external students* because the external students they are encouraged to answer the questions and refer to their own experience, but *they are not encouraged to ask the other students questions* ... So I think we really need to work on this. (Tutor, Australian)

Given the course emphasis on interactivity and peer-to-peer learning, the tutors taking the online classes meet weekly in addition to the regular teaching staff meetings to discuss ways to modify course materials and activities to enhance engagement, interactivity and experiential learning amongst online students. Despite these efforts their comments reveal this as an area of the course that needs further development, as online students are required to post their ideas and reflections but not to interact and engage with one another. This means that they do not have the same opportunity for experiential learning as students attending internal tutorial groups, as the focus is primarily on learning the subject matter (intercultural communication) as objectified knowledge. While they are posting online about their experiences and understandings of intercultural

communication, from the tutors' perspective, they are not experiencing or practising intercultural communication in the ways that students have the opportunity to do in the face-to-face tutorial classes.

Thirdly, tutors reflect on their own practice in this way, seeing themselves as participants in an ongoing dialogue that could take them into unfamiliar territory, which could be both risky and rewarding. On the one hand, valuing students' knowledges, expertise, languages and cultures and opening up classroom dialogue could position teachers and students outside of their comfort zone. On the other hand, this creates opportunities for co-learning (Garcia & Li Wei 2014), as tutors acknowledge that they are partners in learning alongside students.

Fourthly, tutors employ a process of modelling, rather than simply telling students, how to interrogate new knowledge and to recognise that there are multiple ways of knowing. Tutors model the 'How?' questions, critical thinking, recognition that there are multiple knowledge systems and a multiplicity of perspectives in play when exploring a phenomenon, and how to respond respectfully to others in the class.

*I think just knowing that they're not going to be judged too harshly, that there's no wrong answer, just give it a shot, because we talk, everyone gives their answers to the question from their group to the whole class. The one group that was responsible for that question, they answer it, and then I say, 'OK, that's interesting, does anyone else want to add to that?' or 'What do you think about this point?' I always give them something positive even if it was a swing and a miss. (Tutor, Australian)*

Here we can see how tutors employ a fifth strategy, of giving constructive feedback when students contribute to class discussion, bringing the cycle of creating a safe space for sharing understandings of course content to completion. Creating an environment that enhances student participation and experiential learning and the provision of processes that scaffold students' learning is seen as important by teachers and students, as the interview extracts in Figure 4.3 reveal.



Figure 4.3: Perspectives on an integrated approach to teaching and learning: Processual scaffolding (interview extracts)

Teacher perspectives	Student perspectives
<p>I have noticed because I come and sit with them for a bit when they're talking in their group, that <i>they're now contributing a bit more</i>, so that's kind of cool as well, because <i>they have really interesting things to say</i>, but <i>they have to feel comfortable</i> to do so. But again, it's not just international students, it's everyone. (Tutor, Australian)</p> <p>I've always tried to <i>make it obvious to the students, that this is important to them</i>. Like what we're talking about, <i>there's a reason why we're doing it</i>. And especially with the reflection stuff we do in class, I'm trying to get them to talk about their experiences, I've tried to make it, this is not some airy fairy conversation that we're having, <i>this is important for your understanding</i>. So I've tried to <i>make that explicit</i> for them. That <i>we're doing this for a reason</i>. Because at the end of the day, one of the main concerns for students is that they get the grades, that they pass or they get the grades that they want, and so <i>they need to know from the outset what's important</i>. They're constantly filtering, <i>'Do I really need to do this? Do I not have to?'</i> I think having the reading questions in class, and the emphasis that we've had on making those connections between the literature and their own experiences has maybe made them <i>jump that gap</i> earlier in the course. (Tutor, Australian)</p>	<p>I've always thought that reading groups like that, especially when you're dealing with theoretical work, it's probably one of the <i>better ways</i> to go. Rather than having the entire class to talk at the same time, <i>it helps, the different groups break it up a lot easier</i>. Because otherwise you can get the class just taken over by a few people, while the others haven't really read it thoroughly, or they haven't read it at all. <i>This way it's much better</i>. Trying to get the entire class <i>engaging with the material</i> provided. So I think yeah, <i>I think the reading groups have been very useful</i>. And it's also just <i>interesting to see how different people interpret it</i> as well, and how <i>they may take away different things</i>. I may have found one paragraph particularly interesting to me, but then someone else would have found another one which to them seemed to be a bit more interesting. Yeah, I think <i>definitely the reading groups are the way to go</i>. You're <i>sharing ideas and interpretations</i>. <i>Very, very valuable</i>. As well, at least the way it's done in our tutorial, <i>we always come together as the class afterwards</i>, and then each group answers one or so questions. And so <i>that also gives you an understanding of how others in the class at the same time as your group</i>. I think <i>that's a very valuable way of going about it</i>. (Domestic student)</p>

These extracts highlight how teachers and students value the opportunities to develop their understanding through sharing their diverse knowledges and interpretations of the subject matter, supported through processes such as the small group discussions.

This integrated approach provides students with conceptual, linguistic and processual scaffolding that involves:

- making explicit how each element of the course contributes to the whole and building connections across the weeks of the course
- providing a conceptual framework and a vocabulary that students can practise using in tutorial groups
- creating an environment in which students feel their existing knowledges and experience is valued and it is safe to share their understandings
- personalisation of subject matter so that students can see how course content can be applied in relevant and meaningful ways in their discipline, and beyond, and in their social and professional lives
- facilitating interaction so that students can make connections with their existing knowledge
- experiencing the substance of the course, intercultural communication, in learning
- making space for and valuing the multiple interpretations, of seeing how others see
- understanding teaching and learning as a conversation in which tutors and students are partners in learning
- reflective practising by teaching staff and students
- modelling sensitive and respectful feedback for students during tutorial discussions.

#### 4.1.2. Teaching staff meetings

Given the need to coordinate carefully a large course and a diverse group of tutors, each week the course coordinators and tutors met for an hour to debrief on the previous week, brief on the coming week, and discuss how lectures, tutorial groups and assessment tasks were going. This was also a forum for teachers to share ideas and resources for tutorials with one another, and was strongly endorsed by the course coordinators. As the tutors for the 2015 iteration of the course came from a wide variety of disciplinary backgrounds (for example, applied linguistics, sociology, cultural studies and anthropology), different interpretations were potentially in play. For this reason, discussions involved making the orientation of the course explicit and developing shared understandings around key course concepts. The following extract from the transcript of one of these meetings highlights how the negotiation of meanings and approach to teaching and learning in tutorials was approached as a collaborative endeavour in these meetings, which continued throughout the course:

I think the approach to it, I mean now we have our weekly tutor meetings where people can make suggestions for such things, but it's always *'OK, but how do we understand this?'* or *'What are the different understandings around this?'* And people are speaking up. We've got a larger group of tutors now and some of them are saying *'Well I find that very patronising, I'd have great difficulty showing that in my class'* but then someone else will say *'But yes, what if we're looking at it from this perspective? Yes it's patronising, but why do we think it's patronising?'* and getting the students to explore it in that way, *so that's been very valuable.* (Tutor, Australian, multilingual)

Resources and strategies for developing students' language and literacies for academic life are also shared at these meetings. For example, a tutor who had reflected on the challenges students found

with critical reading of academic texts drew on her experience of teaching English as an additional language to develop an activity in which students worked in small groups first to explain and summarise in their own words key ideas from the first four course readings, and then to help one another draw connections between the perspectives of different authors. In another example, a resource (Figure 4.4) was shared amongst tutors to help students with the genre of reflective writing, as it became apparent that this was unfamiliar territory for many students.

In relation to students' written texts, tutors also discussed how to help them understand why and how to reference sources. Tutors continued discussing these questions with students in the tutorial classes. Although tutors were able to direct students to learning resources on the university website, the teaching team felt that these resources did not reflect an orientation to referencing that was more than simply descriptive; they observed that at times the orientation was punitive rather than educative. Therefore, the members of the teaching team who were involved in the research project collaborated with members of the learning and teaching unit to develop a new resource. The new resource was not available for this iteration of the course, but a section of it is shown in Figure 4.5 to illustrate the approach taken to developing students' referencing knowledge and expertise. The full resource, which will become an I-spring resource on the course website, can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 4.4: Reflective writing resource

### *Reflective writing*

Experiences, ideas and observations you have had, and how they relate to the course or topic.

**Alternative interpretations** or different perspectives on what you have read or done in your course.

**Comparisons** and **connections** between what you are learning and:

- your prior knowledge and experience;
- your prior assumptions and preconceptions;
- what you know from other courses or disciplines.

How new ideas **challenge** what you already know.

**What you need to explore next** in terms of thoughts and actions.

### *Writing style*

As it concerns your thoughts, reflective writing is mostly **subjective**. Therefore in addition to being **reflective** and **logical**, you can be **personal**, **hypothetical**, **critical** and **creative**. You can comment based on your experience, rather than limiting yourself to academic evidence.

Reflective writing is an activity that includes **description** (what, when, who) and **analysis** (how, why, what if). It is an explorative tool often resulting in more questions than answers.

A reflective task may allow you to use different modes of writing and language:

- **descriptive** (outlining what something is or how something was done)
- **explanatory** (explaining why or how it is like that)
- **expressive** (I think, I feel, I believe)

Use full sentences and complete paragraphs.

You can usually use personal pronouns like 'I', 'my' or 'we'.

Keep colloquial language to a minimum (eg, kid, bloke, stuff).

### *Reflective writing tips*

Think of an interaction, event or episode you experienced that can be connected to the topic.

- Describe what happened
- What was your role?
- What feelings and perceptions surrounded the experience?
- How would you explain the situation to someone else?
- What might this experience mean in the context of your course?
- What other perspectives, theories or concepts could be applied to the situation?

This resource was adapted from the following source:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-do-i-write-reflectively>

Figure 4.5: Referencing resource

*Slide 1: What is referencing?*

Referencing is a practice that has been undertaken for hundreds of years. There is evidence that referencing existed as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The examination of texts from different cultures will show us that referencing conventions vary in different contexts. In some cultures, who came up with a particular idea is really important and they have to be acknowledged. This can be observed in Western academic settings. In other cultures, how creatively an idea is communicated is given importance. It is possible to demonstrate both in our writing. We can tell a logical and critical story about a topic and this can be done creatively. We can make this more credible by including what others have said about the same topic. By doing this we also enable a discourse with the authors of the original idea. Whichever way it is done, referencing allows interaction to take place between the writer and others who have written about a similar topic. Moreover, by identifying the voice of others, we make our own voice or position clear.

*Slide 2: Becoming a member of a community*

Each discipline in the University is made up of a community. When we enrol in a study program whether it is Education, Applied Linguistics, International Studies or Media Studies, we become a member of that community. This community is called a Community of Practice and all of its members will do things in a particular manner such as writing in a certain style or employing particular referencing conventions. Although we may have used referencing in a specific manner in the past or maybe even not have used it at all, in our current context we have to follow what our Community of Practice recommends. As members of our Community of Practice, we work towards building and refining an understanding of the world we live in through the many practices we undertake including referencing.

*Slide 3: Disciplinary knowledge and writing*

The information that we obtain from texts we read are usually discipline specific. Although the core ideas may be the same, where the text is published and the language it is written in can impact on the way the information is communicated. This goes back to the earlier idea about how referencing is undertaken differently in different cultures. Sometimes we may come across texts published in a different language that is relevant to what we are writing. The referencing conventions in these texts may vary from what we are usually used to. If we use the information from these texts in our writing, we have to acknowledge this in the convention that is recommended by our Community of Practice. So what we will be doing is using the information we obtained from another culture to suit the cultural practices of our own community.

*Slide 4: Referencing and the texts we read*

The weekly readings we are assigned in our courses are not facts to be memorised but perspectives to consider and evaluate. Rather than memorise and recount the debates that occur in the texts we read, we need to learn to engage in the conversation so that we can explore, test and develop our understanding. When we are asked to do an assignment at University, our task is to read widely, analyse, reflect on and evaluate everything in order to form our own perspective while remaining attentive to the perspective of others. Fundamental to this is demonstrating that we can engage in the process of 'critical thinking'. Being 'critical' does not mean being negative or criticising what is being said about something. It is a process of careful and deliberate examination of ideas, reasoning, assumptions, positions, perspectives and their implications. This helps ensure that our understanding and actions are based on ideas that are sound.

Figure 4.5: Referencing resource contd.

*Slide 5: Referencing and writing*

Referencing is therefore a reflection of how we have engaged with the ongoing academic conversation: the back and forth between *the writer* and other authors in the field. Referencing is the tool that we use in writing to:

- show our readers who we have engaged with in order to consider an issue;
- explain the ideas and perspectives we think are relevant for understanding an issue;
- position ourselves on an issue by explaining how *our* understanding confirms, contests, or extends the ideas developed by others; and
- demonstrate that our position is based on the credible findings of others.

Referencing in our writing also demonstrates our continuous development as a student as they show our readers how well we have engaged in the relevant and important literature on a topic.

Importantly, referencing also serves to acknowledge the hard work of other members in our Community of Practice. They spend a lot of time and effort investigating issues so that the world can benefit from their findings and perspectives. These researchers and thinkers have to be acknowledged for their efforts when we use and build on their ideas in our own work. While we need to evaluate their perspectives critically, we also need to respect their contributions.

Tutors also sourced and shared video clips to be used in class to illustrate key course concepts and engage students in discussion. As can be seen from the previous interview extract, there is much discussion amongst tutors as to how to use these resources to help students draw on theoretical concepts introduced on the course to inform their discussion. In this way, the weekly teacher meetings are not only a collaborative process of teachers keeping one another on the same page; they also play out the agenda of the course. In other words, these meetings engender an intercultural orientation that acknowledges the multiplicity of knowledges, interpretations, reactions and responses to the subject matter. Before turning to consider how this intercultural orientation to teaching and learning is accomplished in the classroom, we will first consider how the approach to assessment tasks contributes to the overall integrated and scaffolded approach of the course.

#### 4.1.3 Assessment and feedback

The conceptual, linguistic and processual scaffolding used in lectures and tutorials was carried through into the assessment experience. While assessments included three summative tasks, they were also designed to be formative in terms of the specific learning outcomes of this course and the language and literacies development in their university programs more broadly.

As an example, Assessment #1 (Figure 4.6) was a review of one of the first four readings of the course.

Figure 4.6: Assessment #1 Review

**Assessment #1**

Write a review of one of the articles from weeks 1 to 4 (1. Scollon, Scollon & Jones; 2. Blommaert; 3. Heugh or 4. Leuder, Marsland & Nekvapil).

Choose one of these readings to review:

1. introduce the key ideas of the article
2. explain how the author understands key terms (e.g. How does s/he understand 'culture' or 'intercultural communication'?) What perspective does s/he take?
3. summarise the main points made by the author in the article in your own words
4. outline the examples/evidence the author uses to illustrate these points
5. in doing so, refer to the perspectives taken in two other articles from weeks 1–4
6. consider how the article furthers your understanding of intercultural communication

Assessment criteria for the task (These are the things that you will need to show in your writing to successfully complete the task):

1. Ability to explain key ideas covered in the readings
2. Ability to structure a response
3. Clarity and accuracy of expression.

This written task asks students to explain and summarise key ideas in an academic article, to make connections between how the author of the primary text and two other authors developed and supported their argument, and to consider these different perspectives in terms of the knowledge and experience they themselves could bring to the topic. As their first written assessment for the course, this task is designed to introduce students to critical reading of academic texts and academic writing. At this point students have already extensively discussed each of the four readings they could draw on in this assessment task in small group discussions in tutorials, and tutors have ensured that these conversations about the course readings and key ideas are kept in play week by week. In these discussions students have begun to draw connections between the authors' different perspectives. For example, students made connections, usually in terms of comparisons and contrasts between how the different authors understood key terms, how they used evidence to support their views, but students also make connections between these things in light of their own knowledge and experiences. In addition, the way the assessment is worded, broken down into a straightforward list of actions that students needed to do in order to complete the task (e.g. 'introduce', 'explain', 'summarise') created a simple pathway for students to approach this written task. Each of the steps mirror in a small way what students are later asked to do in Assessment #3, the essay. Another form of scaffolding was the feedback they received on Assessment #1 in terms of their strengths and what they would need to work on for the essay, as evidenced in the following comment:

Also, as first year students as well, if they have put in a lot of effort and they've come to everything, and they get a really bad mark, or you don't give them constructive feedback or anything like that, it can be quite damaging. (Tutor, Australian)

Individual feedback for each student is provided in a feedback sheet and in comments on their paper (see example in Figure 4.7), and in more generalised feedback that is discussed with the class as a whole. The emphasis for this assessment is on being concise and constructive, given that this is for many students, one of their first written assessment tasks at university.

Figure 4.7: Assessment #1/Review feedback examples

Assessment Feedback Sheet				
School of Communication, International Studies and Languages				
Course				
Assessment 1: Review (30%) due 11p.m. 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2015				
Name				
Criteria		Comment by marker about assessment component		
Ability to explain key ideas covered in the readings		Your review shows a good understanding of key concepts with relevant connections to other literature, but how you understand these connections needed more explanation. Great reflection.		
Ability to structure a response		Think about paragraph structure/give each paragraph a clear purpose to explain and exemplify one key concept from the paper.		
Clarity and accuracy of expression		Mostly clear.		
Appropriate referencing		See comments on your paper.		
Summary comment				
You've captured key ideas, but not all key terms defined.				
Grade	Notation	Notational %	Grade description	Assignment mark
High distinction	HD	85–100	An exceptional piece of work in every regard	70
Distinction	D	75–84	A good attempt exhibiting high quality work in most areas	
Credit	C	65–74	A sound attempt exhibiting high quality work in some areas	
Pass level 1	P1	55–64	A sound attempt	
Pass level 2	P2	50–54	Just passable	
Fail level 1	F1	40–49	Not passable - some areas requiring improvement	
Fail level 2	F2	below 40	Not passable - most areas requiring improvement	
What you will need to work on before the next assignment				
Edit for grammar, spelling.				
Be explicit and give more detail about the connections you understand between different authors' perspectives.				
Define key terms in your own words, e.g. how does the author explain 'register', 'dis-citizenship'?				



*Feedback comment on student's paper:*

In these introduction paragraphs you give an outline of some of the theorisations you will refer to, which is fine, but don't assume the reader knows what terms like 'polycentricity' mean, there are many unfamiliar terms without explanation early in the essay. Suggestion - start by setting the scene for the reader in one or two sentences by bringing together the ideas you've mentioned (I've highlighted them in yellow) that outline some of the issues/challenges/risks/benefits for people communicating across languages and cultures. Then mention some of the theories you will be drawing on to support your argument. This puts your reader in the picture and you can put in further detail later in the essay.

An important part of this feedback is to highlight to students what they had done well, and what they would need to work on for the subsequent assessments. In the case of students for whom English was an additional language (as both of these examples illustrate), tutors recognise that feedback comments needed to be given in Plain English.

Assessment #2 (see Figure 4.8) is an oral seminar presentation with a partner in which students are asked to present their analysis of an interaction they have each experienced, drawing on key ideas from the course. Having already encountered the key course ideas in lectures and readings, workshopped them in small group discussions in the tutorials, and selected some of them to write about in the review, the second assessment task builds on this by getting students to apply these concepts to their analysis of an interaction they themselves have experienced. The rationale for students working in pairs is to provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and to develop their skills of working collaboratively, a UniSA graduate quality (GQ4).

Figure 4.8: Assessment #2 Seminar Presentation

### **Assessment #2**

Presentations will be done in pairs, commencing in week 6, at a time negotiated with your tutor.

You will have 15 minutes for your presentation and 5 minutes for questions and discussion. We invite you to be creative in presenting your ideas.

The presentation is based on your experiences of intercultural communication, either as a participant or as an observer. In preparing for your presentation, you will need to record the detail of such experiences in terms of:

- roles
- the nature of the interaction
- the intercultural dimensions of communication
- your/others' responses.

For your presentation, you and your partner present and discuss two experiences of intercultural communication that you have had, one for each presenter. Drawing on ideas from the course, the course readings and your own experience/interests:

1. explain why you chose these experiences as examples of intercultural communication
2. describe what you observed during the experiences (about yourselves and others)
3. discuss your reflections on what it is that was going in these examples of intercultural communication
4. consider together how these experiences and reflections have affected your thinking about yourselves and others and what is involved in intercultural communication

Assessment criteria for seminar presentation

1. appropriate selection and description of an experience of intercultural communication
2. demonstrated understanding of key ideas and relevant readings
3. appropriate organisation and clarity of presentation
4. appropriate/creative use of audio/visual technologies
5. evidence of reflection and reflexivity

This task was an introduction to public speaking and PowerPoint presentation that requires students to explore key ideas from the course in a way that is meaningful to them in their sociocultural or professional lives. The opportunity for peer-to-peer learning and to explore course ideas in relation to their experience of an interaction that they can later use in their final assessment task is seen as an important scaffolding process, as the feedback they would be given could inform how they might approach the analysis in preparation for their essay writing. Tutors see the value of the oral presentation, and the critical role of feedback (see Figure 4.9) in developing students' oral and written skills:

[In reference to International students] And so I completely understand how that spontaneous sharing is extremely difficult. So I think the Presentations are good in the sense that 'OK, this is, clearly I have fifteen minutes where I'm going to talk and no-one is going to interrupt me, and I can practise it'. So yeah, I think for the international students it's really good, and for a lot of our, because I have a few students from refugee backgrounds that were a little bit similar. And I think

for a lot of the other students it also gave them a point of something to talk about with them afterwards. (Tutor, Australian)

Her first assignment was quite poor, and then she paired with a really good student for her presentation. Together they produced a really good presentation, it was a HD, and then her essay, it was like a light bulb moment for her as well. She really started to become more active in class ... And so for her I really think she changed a lot during the course which was brilliant. But not just as whatever we're trying to achieve in the course, but also I think as a student. (Tutor, Australian)

Figure 4.9: Assessment #2/Seminar Presentation feedback example

Assessment Feedback Sheet				
School of Communication, International Studies and Languages				
Assessment 2: Seminar Presentation (20%)				
Name(s)				
Criteria		Comment by marker about assessment component		
Appropriate selection and description of an experience of intercultural communication		You both selected experiences that were relevant to you, and explained why you thought they were examples of intercultural communication, giving interesting examples to support your claims.		
Demonstrated understanding of key ideas and relevant readings		<p>Student A, the strength of your presentation was the way you related your personal experience of moving between English and Italian, to key ideas from the course. You did this well when exploring the ambiguity of language and the need to infer meaning.</p> <p>Student B, the strength of your presentation was the way you made connections between your experience with your Turkish friends in Spain and notions of register and the ambiguity of language.</p> <p>For both, when discussing your experiences in the essay, think about how you cast yourself and others as examples of diversity. For example, is there a sense of hierarchy or privilege, if so, how does this matter for you/the people involved?</p>		
Appropriate organisation and clarity of presentation		Good structure, clearly expressed.		
Appropriate/creative use of audio/visual technologies		The PowerPoint highlighted key points. Would have been great to link some of the concepts you discussed to the course readings.		
Evidence of reflection and reflexivity		<p>Student A, your reflection highlighted questions around how we <i>learn</i> culture and the relationship between our language, culture and expressing identity – this was great.</p> <p>Students B, your reflection highlighted questions around who is a legitimate speaker of a language, and the idea that this experience has made you more aware of/changed how you talk to people.</p>		
Summary comment				
You drew your individual experiences together well and used them to exemplify some key concepts from the course.				
Grade	Notation	Notational %	Grade description	Assignment mark
High distinction	HD	85–100	An exceptional piece of work in every regard	84
Distinction	D	75–84	A good attempt exhibiting high quality work in most areas	
Credit	C	65–74	A sound attempt exhibiting high quality work in some areas	
Pass level 1	P1	55–64	A sound attempt	
Pass level 2	P2	50–54	Just passable	
Fail level 1	F1	40–49	Not passable - some areas requiring improvement	
Fail level 2	F2	below 40	Not passable - most areas requiring improvement	

This form meets the 2015 requirements of UniSA's Code of Good Practice: Student Assessment

The interview extracts highlight how the tutors take into account the different language needs of students, whether they are international students or local students from multilingual migrant backgrounds. Talking in class was recognised as a potentially confronting experience for students for whom English was an additional language. These students are supported by taking the pressure off them to share 'spontaneously' in front of the whole class, as they had been able to discuss their analysis with their partner beforehand and the seminar presentation gives them a structure to follow. In sharing their experiences and understandings in their presentations, new opportunities for engagement between all students arose in tutorial discussions, as the emphasis on personalised learning means that these multilingual students are able to share something of themselves in their presentations, which they otherwise may not have the opportunity to share for fear of being misunderstood. Whether students are local or domestic, monolingual or multilingual, working together on the oral presentation on material that was relevant and meaningful to them gives students the possibility of mediating one another's understandings and becoming more engaged with course content, taking their learning beyond what they might accomplish working on their own. This also provides students with the opportunity to explore their own and others' reactions and responses, to consider how their ideas are received and interpreted by others. The feedback students are given is done in such a way that it identifies the strengths and aspects they could improve on for the essay. This was seen as important as their analysis of an experience and the synthesis of their argument in this task would become the foundation for the third assessment task, the essay (see Figure 4.10).

In assessment #3, the essay, students are required to make connections between the theoretical concepts encountered on the course and their own experiences, and to draw on academic sources to support their analysis of their chosen experience of an interaction. All of this is practised extensively in the small group discussions in tutorials and/or both assessment tasks #1 and #2. Further scaffolding is provided in the wording of this assessment, with the emphasis on actions the students would need to do to complete the task, as in assessment #1. The way in which the assessment is worded does not explicitly ask students to draw connections between the three experiences they discuss in their essay, but in the regular teaching meeting this was identified as an important step for students to take their essay beyond being simply descriptive. Tutors did raise this with students in class, and some, but not all students attempted to draw the analysis of the experiences together into an overarching point, as the following extract from a student's essay illustrates:

Each of these experiences has allowed me to develop an understanding of what the term 'culture' means, the impact migration has had on superdiversity which now requires everyone to have intercultural awareness, the way individuals including myself unfairly use categorization to make sense of situations, the types of spatial and cultural borders others and I may come across and how to react to them, the way registers are appropriately and inappropriately used in different environments, and the impact technology including the media has had on the creation of stereotypes and false realities. Overall, each of the experiences have allowed me to identify the need for intercultural awareness in every country, so that communication and interaction between cultures can be successfully implemented, analysed and reflected upon. (Domestic student)

Figure 4.10: Assessment #3/Essay

### **Assessment #3**

In your essay you are required to explain your understanding of intercultural communication. Drawing on ideas from the course, relevant literature (including course readings) and your own experience/interests, describe and reflect on three experiences that you have had of intercultural communication. One of these experiences could be the same as the one you presented in Assessment 2. In your essay:

1. introduce the key ideas that will inform your reflections on your experiences
2. explain why you chose these experiences as examples of intercultural communication
3. describe what you observed during the experiences (about yourself and others)

With reference to relevant literature:

4. discuss your reflections on what it is that is going in these experiences
5. suggest how these experiences exemplify intercultural communication in the contemporary world
6. consider how these experiences and reflections have affected your thinking about yourself and others in intercultural communication, including language, culture and communication.
7. attach your observation notes on the three examples of intercultural communication to your essay as an appendix.

As part of this assessment task you will develop a one page essay plan to be discussed with your tutor in the tutorial, week 10. You will need to:

1. outline the key ideas that will inform your reflections on your experiences
2. identify the three experiences of intercultural communication
3. include a list of key references from relevant literature
4. bring your essay plan to class in week 10 to workshop in groups/discuss with your tutor
5. include notes/ideas from the workshop into your essay plan to show the development of your ideas
6. submit your essay plan and notes with your essay

It is strongly recommended that internet sources be kept to a minimum and then only if referencing factual/statistical information or the reference pertains to an online academic journal.

Criteria for assessing the essay:

#### **Content**

1. evidence of reflection and reflexivity
2. demonstrated understanding and use of relevant literature
3. quality of argument developed and conclusions drawn

#### **Structure**

1. clear structure (an introduction that presents the focus and main arguments, a body that presents and illustrates the main points and shows how they relate to the task, and a brief conclusion)
2. appropriate referencing (in text referencing of material used from other authors, accurate list of references)
3. appropriate use of language conventions such as grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Another way of supporting students was the introduction of an essay plan, workshopped in small groups in the week 10 tutorial class. For many students, it is one of the first academic essays they will write at university. The following interview extracts illustrate how tutors and students have evaluated their experience of the course in terms of the assessment experience:

I found this course really interesting – putting daily interactions that are already familiar to us and then working with what is actually happening culturally is something that I particularly loved! I liked that the assignments for this course enabled each student to fully grasp the concepts taught as they incorporated experiences from our lives. (Course evaluation response)

And so for some of the students I think with us starting the essay plans in week 9 really sort of helped them actually have the opportunity to produce something that was decent. Because this stuff takes a while to do the whole reflection. It's not an easy essay I don't think. (Tutor, Australian)

[In reference to critical thinking] And if that's what it takes to get a HD, I'm wondering, well for me anyway, if I'm giving those guys HD's because that's the better mark, then I'm wondering if we should be scaffolding that more. Or making it slightly more explicit. (Tutor, Australian)

A: So I was wondering maybe we should, I agree with you in scaffolding and requirements for the final essay, for the final mark, the essay mark, but the problem is also looking at how the student has progressed. Because *not everyone starts from the same point*. (Tutor, Australian)

B: And *not everyone reaches the same point*. (Tutor, International, multilingual)

I think sometimes with *the assessment criteria, things could be a little more clear sometimes*. Or maybe what I actually mean is, *what is required of us?* I'm very keen on being thorough and getting good marks. I'm not here just to pass. When people talk about 'You do this and you'll pass'. I'm interested in how I can excel, so *I appreciate it when tutors, when they talk about the assessment criteria, when they can differentiate for us, what it takes to pass and what it takes to excel*. (Domestic student)

These extracts show how the scaffolding provided for assessments has generally been evaluated positively, yet more could be done in terms of the clarity of the assessment criteria, in particular making the importance given to demonstrating critical thinking more explicit.

This section has considered how an integrated and scaffolded approach to teaching, learning and assessment contributes to students' learning of both the subject matter and their language and academic literacies. Overall, students have been positive about their experience of the course activities and the assessment experience, although some comments indicate that they would like more detail for the assessment criteria. In the next section we turn to consider how and why an intercultural orientation to teaching learning and assessment has been taken, and why this matters from the perspectives of teaching staff and students.

## 4.2 An intercultural orientation to teaching, learning and assessment

In addition to the course being organised and scaffolded in terms of the theoretical concepts relating to the study of the course topic, in this case intercultural communication, and students' academic literacies, an *intercultural orientation* was taken to teaching, learning and assessment on this course. This involves acknowledging and engaging with the diverse knowledge systems, experiences and linguistic and cultural repertoires that students bring to their learning on the course. In addition, the processes of reflection and reflexivity, and the reciprocal exchange of knowledges and

understandings, are fundamental to this intercultural orientation and are also very much part of the scaffolding of the course, as they provide opportunities for experiential learning that would in turn contribute to developing students' intercultural learning capabilities. This aligns with UniSA's *Crossing the horizon* strategy of creating globally capable individuals. The following section will first explore how the intercultural orientation taken to teaching and learning for the course influences understandings of, and reactions and responses to, communicating in diversity.

#### 4.2.1. Understanding oneself in diversity

In undertaking this core undergraduate course, students of diverse disciplines, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ways of knowing and working, experience and interests, find themselves engaging not only with course materials (that had also been carefully selected to illustrate diversity) but also with one another. For some students it is the first time they might have a conversation with, let alone do group work with, someone from a different linguistic and cultural background. The teaching staff also reflect a great deal of diversity, as described in Chapter 2. Equipped with a conceptual framework and a vocabulary (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.1) with which to articulate their developing understandings of theorisations of intercultural communication and emerging understandings of how it might be experienced and practised, students are consistently invited to consider course content in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them.

For many students, taking themselves as a starting point in the study of intercultural communication comes as a surprise:

When I first started the course I thought it would be based on other people. So like other countries, other languages, but I found out it was also about how *you* interact with other, the others, so the other countries and languages. (Domestic student, Australian)

I think when I first started studying intercultural communication, my first thing it made me think it was going to be 'world-wide communication', just someone from a different culture from me, that's what I thought it was going to be about. (Domestic, multilingual, migrant)

Tutors support students by sharing their own experiences of living in diversity and modelling how to respectfully acknowledge the diverse ways others might engage with these concepts. To do this, tutors have created opportunities for students to consider the diverse knowledge systems and understandings that people from different disciplines and linguistic and cultural backgrounds would bring to how they might interpret and apply the subject matter of the course. As previously mentioned, rather than simply telling students about theorisations of intercultural communication, the classroom becomes a space for developing an intercultural orientation that could be applied both within and beyond the classroom.

In taking an intercultural orientation to understanding diversity, teachers take into account the communication challenges and the potential for some students to be marginalised, which they have noted as a particular risk for international students. This is highlighted in the following interview extract:

... they (international students) were saying that they felt judged all the time ... by the other students, because of their accent you know, because there's just 'What? What? What?' all the time and they feel intimidated. (Tutor, Australian)

Tutors invite all students to consider interculturality beyond notions of ethnic or national boundaries. They also create a sense of inclusion and legitimation for those who could perceive themselves as 'less travelled' or less experienced in living and working in contexts of diversity. For



example, some domestic students considered themselves at a disadvantage alongside international and local students of migrant background, who they perceive as having more exposure to diversity and therefore greater intercultural expertise.

From the teachers' perspective, developing students' capabilities to embrace an intercultural orientation in their learning is an active process of guiding the conversation from being simply about others, or being alongside others with a focus on their potential differences (the 'My trip to Bali' understanding of diversity as one tutor put it), to being about oneself in relation to others and in interaction with others. It also involves creating opportunities for students to experience intercultural interaction while being very attentive to matters such as the ways in which people might be categorised and the consequences this could have for students. This is illustrated in the following interview extract:

I think it's just giving people an opportunity to talk about their experiences, but only what they're prepared to share. *I think it's unfair to pick on one group just because you see them as an example of diversity.* And that's the other trouble, that when you start doing that, you point them out, 'Yes, this is what diversity looks like'. Not an Anglo-looking person. Just because you look a certain way doesn't mean that you are ... I mean what does that even mean? *The whole idea of diversity is problematic* I think, because really, a lot of those students in their day to day life, what they're trying to do is find common ground with other people, so I think it would be unfair if we were to try and undo all their work, by showing how really different they are. If you know what I mean. What I really don't want to happen is all the international students to group together. The problem when that happens, I think they lose out a lot on the course anyway. But I think that's for any course, you see that happening. (Tutor, Australian)

To do this, tutors are careful not to hold certain students up as examples of diversity while casting others as the norm. Rather, they encourage all students to problematise the notion of diversity. This tutor highlights how categorising one group (e.g. international students) as an example of diversity, while others are not, can be counterproductive to an intercultural orientation to teaching and learning, as it makes assumptions about people that could impact on how they might participate in class. An important and more equitable and productive aspect of the intercultural orientation of the course is to include *all* students as examples of diversity, whether they are international students or local students from Anglo Australian, migrant or refugee backgrounds, and not just those cast as 'others'. This is part of a conscious strategy to develop intercultural learning capabilities in all students, by disrupting conceptions of diversity as the exotic 'other' or as a 'problem' that some people have and others do not. This encourages students to think of themselves as communicating in diversity, not only as observers, but also as participants.

Starting with themselves and being asked to consider diversity in a way that for many students is very different to previous understandings opens up new possibilities, as the following interview extracts illustrate:

*It transcends what most people would consider as culture as being national borders or state borders and language borders and that it becomes something that encompasses humanity as a whole in every aspect.* (Domestic student, Australian)

Of course it is talking about different cultures, but it's also about people you would assume would be the same and would have the same interests as you, I found that it's a lot more diverse. Just communicating with someone, it doesn't necessarily have to be they're from a different country or religion, they're still very diverse. (Domestic, multilingual, migrant)

Thinking about diversity in these terms enables students to acknowledge not just others, but also themselves, as examples of diversity, and their own linguistic and cultural situatedness. As one local student explained, it highlighted ‘how much of our reactions are based on us considering ourselves the norm’. This legitimates and enables all students to draw on their own existing knowledges and experience in novel ways. For example, local students, whether they are multilingual or monolingual, of migrant background or ‘fifth generation’ Australian, can draw on the notions of ‘registers’ (Blommaert, 2013) in making sense of how they communicate differently when moving between their diverse cultural memberships, regardless of whether these memberships are ethnic, religious, social, study or work-related. For some, simply moving from the country to the city to attend university could now be an experience which they could analyse by taking an intercultural stance, and making connections to concepts explored during the course. For some local students, the linguistic and cultural repertoires afforded by their own or their parents’ migrant heritage become salient when exploring the ideas and theories associated with course subject matter (see sample student essay, Appendix 4). For international students, the ideas explored during the course are felt to be very pertinent to their experience of adapting to living and studying in Australia in a language and culture that is not their home language and culture, but they no longer feel confined to consider their experience from this dimension alone.

#### 4.2.2 The role of reflection

The process of reflection throughout the course is a key aspect of the scaffolding that enables students to develop their capability to critically analyse their own understandings and assumptions, as they are encouraged to reflect on their experience of and their reactions and responses to interacting in diversity. As one student said, ‘The whole course for me is just to step back out of my normal life! I just step back and analyse everything!’ This process of reflection is invoked consistently throughout the course. In lectures, students are introduced to and invited to reflect on key concepts such as ‘categorisation’ or ‘borders’. This is carried on into the tutorial classes, where students are invited to reflect further on these key concepts in relation to their own experiences, and share their reflections in small group discussions. For example, in week 8, the theme is ‘Intercultural Communication in the Professions’, and students are invited to discuss questions in small groups and to draw connections between theory and practice from their own experiences of interacting, learning, living and working in contexts of diversity (see Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11: Tutorial reflection questions

Consider linguistic and cultural diversities among people (including yourself) in a working environment with which you are familiar.

How do people interact with respect to:

- assumptions about each other?
- language(s) used with each other?
- judgments about each other?

What difference does this make to your understanding of:

- the relationship between understanding and trusting in professional work?
- your intercultural communication in the workplace?

Inviting students to reflect through personalising their discussion of course subject matter encouraged students to explore their understandings of the relationship between languages,

cultures, communication, learning, identity and belonging, and how this matters. To do this, tutors facilitate an ongoing conversation in which students are invited to step outside of what may have previously been taken for granted or considered as routine or overlooked, to notice and analyse in more nuanced ways:

It teaches you topics that you deal with in everyday life but *you are not aware of it until you visit this course*. (Course evaluation response)

It's helped me not to make assumptions. *You can't help but make assumptions, but it's made me more critical*. A lot of the things you read, day to day things, *I don't assume that everyone has the same story*. It's not like before I was ignorant, *I have a better understanding and more open*. *Not assuming that everyone's the same*, regardless of whether we're doing the same course or the same age. *Just a deeper insight into what 'intercultural' means, to myself, and to others also*. Communication between everyone. It's given me a major insight into what it means to be in a multicultural environment. (Domestic student, multilingual, migrant)

I think *it has helped me to think more carefully* I guess, *more thoroughly*. ... It's really *complex*. It's really, really hard to explain, but when I look at intercultural studies, communication, it's ... difficult. (Before the course) it was routine. So it wasn't, I didn't really look into it. I just did it along the way. (Domestic student, multilingual, migrant)

As I said, I'm possibly thinking of migrating, and that definitely opens my mind, *and I'm seeing it in a different light* because I think you shouldn't stick to the same place, and you have to go abroad, and the course has helped me because I'm thinking '*Yeah, I have these skills and this knowledge, and how can I use it for a future career?*' ... I definitely think as the course progresses, I'm thinking about my own personality and what I'm doing, if it's appropriate, if it's right, and what should I do to integrate a bit more? Yeah, what should I do? *I'm definitely watching, trying to pick up words*. (International student, multilingual)

For students, becoming competent intercultural communicators involves developing the capability of noticing what has been assumed and thinking critically about the influences that inform their understandings, choices and decisions, and how they react and respond to and make sense of what they learn and experience in interactions with others. These extracts highlight how this intercultural orientation to learning enables students to develop an understanding of the meaning-making potential of language, the influence of their linguistic choices, and the consequences of miscommunication and negative evaluations for themselves and others. An awareness of how language and culture come into play, not only in making oneself understood, but also the kind of person one is understood to be, provides students with an insight into how they have learned, or been socialised into, particular ways of 'knowing', 'understanding' and 'doing' through their upbringing, education and influential forces such as the media. This intercultural orientation attends to the crucial role of language and culture in mediating their own and others' understandings.

This process of reflection is sustained through the assessment experience, which invites students to critically analyse and make connections between the theoretical concepts explored in the course and from their own experience. Extracts from the assessments demonstrate how this is accomplished (see Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12: The process of reflection in assessment tasks (extracts)

<p><i>Assessment #1/Review</i></p> <p>6. <u>consider</u> how the article furthers <u>your understanding</u> of intercultural communication</p> <p><i>Assessment #2/Seminar Presentation</i></p> <p>3. discuss <u>your reflections</u> on what it is that was going in these examples of intercultural communication</p> <p>4. <u>consider</u> together how these experiences and <u>reflections</u> have affected <u>your thinking about yourselves</u> and others and what is involved in intercultural communication</p> <p><i>Assessment #3/Essay</i></p> <p>1. introduce the key ideas that will inform <u>your reflections</u> on your experiences</p> <p>2. explain why you chose these experiences as examples of intercultural communication</p> <p>3. describe what you observed during the experiences (<u>about yourself</u> and others)</p>
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The following comment from a student highlights how the process of reflection is valued:

(Role of reflection) I think that's the part I really enjoyed because *it stepped out of my comfort zone* just in writing alone, writing essays. I think in many of my topics I don't really, I think this is the first time I've done reflections. So I think for me I think it's really helped, not just my academic writing, but just how I apply it, I've seen the essay and *it's really thought provoking*, and *I've really had to concentrate and really think about all these experiences*, whereas before say in another essay in another class, you just go 'I'll just use this theory for the essay'. So that's why *I really enjoyed it*. You put a lot of time and effort into an essay, because you think '*I want to portray my story the best way possible*'. So I think for that *it's really motivated me. I really want to do the best that I can*. I put a lot of effort into thinking and time, and I'm sure everyone else does a lot too, *because it is so reflective*. It does require that sense of '*What I'm writing, am I proud of writing it? Is that getting my point across?*' So I think for that it's just been reflecting, again, on yourself, and everything you do. Simple things. Yeah I think as well just building on the point where I found that I could focus on such a simple basic everyday kind of normal, basic thing, and be able to pick it apart and say '*Look at all these things*' that before, I just thought was the first day of high school. And really it was like you can draw from 'registers' you can draw from everything. So I thought, that's what I find really interesting. *They're just such complex things in the simple, everyday life that you would not acknowledge before*. (Domestic student, multilingual, migrant)

Here we can see that personalising students' learning in this way through a process of reflecting on their knowledge and experience in relation to course concepts is a coherent thread throughout the course. This is seen as important to the course as it was recognised that it is salient to students both now and in the future as graduates, to be able to communicate in contexts of linguistic and cultural diversity. For international students, the relationship between language, communication and belonging is seen as vital for their current study abroad experience and their future employment, and many of the domestic students who are of multilingual, migrant backgrounds, were able to draw on their knowledges, and linguistic and cultural repertoires in making connections between course concepts and their own experiences. Again, these extracts highlight the importance of noticing, taking into account the multiplicity of perspectives and the development of students' awareness of the mediating role of language and culture in interactions. The invitation to reflect is done in such a way that *all* students might find ways of making relevant and meaningful connections between the theoretical concepts and their own knowledge and experience.

Students reported that starting with oneself and reflecting on where one's own perspectives come from is a critical contribution of the course:

I can't remember what reading it was or something, I think it was, it went something like you can only understand someone from your perspective, but you can't fully understand them in a whole, because it's taken from your eyes. Which is really, I'd always thought that but I never knew how to explain it. That was really interesting. *It's not really about communication per se, but understanding, and yourself, you understanding them, and trying to interpret what they're trying to understand about you I guess.* Which is really interesting because I always thought, *you don't really think about yourself first, but it's you that's thinking. You can't really think in someone else's mind.* (Domestic student, Australian)

It's just broken that down. Now I acknowledge that I'm coming from that point of view, whereas before I'd be like, 'No, of course I'm accepting and everyone's equal', but *now I notice where I'm coming from. It's like I'm acknowledging my own personal views.* (Domestic student, multilingual)

I think that space on the reflection process helps, and so I'm thinking '*What might the others think of me?*' or '*What might I think of them?*' therefore it's easier to come to a proper answer. I think that *it all influences me, and I'm exploring it and I'm aware of it.* What comes to my mind is the point of migration, because I'm definitely thinking of moving, not just staying in my home town. (International student, multilingual)

One aspect of this process is inviting students to consider how they have been socialised into thinking, speaking and acting in certain ways:

They're talking about how they didn't realise, but they now realise, how internalised, how learnt, how subconscious, so one student says '*It's helped me look at the way I view and internalise the way people look, behave and speak. I therefore subconsciously categorise them as different. I've realised the contradictory stance that I have internalised and I have become aware of the way I respond to individuals who look, behave or speak differently*' (Tutor, Australian, multilingual)

Teachers challenge students to consider, by invoking the process of reflection, how influential their learnt and internalised understandings are in their positioning of themselves and others differentially in relationship with one another. Through the lectures and their facilitation of class discussions, teachers encourage students to explore the multiple perspectives that can be brought to understanding a phenomenon, by encouraging them to consider the diverse understandings that they each bring with them into the classroom.

In this process, the teachers themselves have felt challenged as they realise that they too could interpret what was going on in interactions from their own perspective of what was 'routine' or 'normal', which could have consequences for how they treat students:

I had a few international students from Chinese backgrounds who got up and spoke in their presentations, and they didn't really participate much in group discussions. Like I'd go around or I'd watch them interacting and they'd be sitting there nodding, but they weren't really contributing, and *I was worried how that might be.* But then they got up at their presentations and just gave really, really *great* presentations about their experience of travelling through the education system. Coming from China, coming for some of their high schooling in Australia, and all the racism they experienced and the misunderstandings, having to adjust, not just in the school setting but in their home stays. And then they come to university, and they don't actually ... one student got up and said '*Look, I observe. My way of participating is by sitting back and watching everybody else, and then I think about that and apply it to myself.*' He got up and gave this terrific presentation about that, and *I think we can look at it from our perspective of where*

*we all want to share and talk about ourselves, but that's not necessarily what they come from.*  
They come from a quieter more reflective way of thinking and knowing and understanding.  
(Tutor)

The teachers related how their own assumptions have been challenged through their experience of the course, how they are also learning alongside students and feel that their own intercultural capabilities are being developed, seen here in the ways that they are able to interpret a phenomenon from multiple perspectives other than their habitual understandings. In this example, the tutor is now able to consider student reticence from an alternative point of view, making sense of it as not necessarily a sign of falling behind students whose first language is English.

Students and teachers acknowledged that an important process in developing an intercultural stance, no matter how 'tolerant' they had previously thought themselves to be, was being more conscious of how their knowledge and ways of knowing have been learned over time through their socialisation in their primary language and culture, and how their own interpretations had been informed and shaped, and the consequent need to take into account how others may have a very different understanding of who they are. All students found that having to consider how others were making sense of them was very much a part of their intercultural experience at university, and this was particularly important for students whose primary language and culture was not Anglo-Australian, as it would affect how they could participate and belong.

#### 4.2.3. The role of reciprocity

Through their experience of the course, students have acknowledged that the emphasis on self-reflection is not simply an introspective or passive process, but involves an exchange of understandings and knowledge, *reciprocally*, as the following extracts exemplify:

I think the course has made me think more about how things can be perceived differently when you're talking to different people, and it's made me just think more about the way I interact with people and how things are perceived and how conversations are going. And it makes me reflect on it more as the conversation is happening and afterwards. Especially in my class there seems to be a diverse range of students. ... When we have conversations about our own experiences, it allows you to learn about things that have happened in their lives and where they've come from, so that sort of gives you something to talk about straight away. It sort of opens the door to conversation. Whereas sometimes, normally it would be a bit more like, you know, they all sit together at one table and don't really interact, but now it's a conversation that we can have. We have a door opened. (Domestic student, Australian)

In the class which I'm in the tutorials there are a number of people who come from various places in the world, refugees included. So *hearing their stories and just sharing the class with them and the dialogue we've had. ... Hearing first hand some people's stories* about the things that they've suffered, refugees I'm talking about specifically, *it was good to get that first-hand account.* (Domestic student, Australian)

So it's really good to have this course, because since it's in a learning environment, no one actively has to be best friends, but we're already discussing the issues of representation and race and language and culture, that *you get to learn things that you might otherwise never have had a conversation about. But the conversations we regularly don't have are sometimes the most important conversation we should be having.* (Domestic student, Australian)

I like the fact that *we got to choose and talk about our own experiences* we have come across with intercultural communication rather than being given someone else's experience to study. (Course evaluation response)

The invitation to share their knowledge, understandings and experiences in tutorial groups with other students with diverse linguistic, cultural and knowledge repertoires and experiences opens up opportunities to consider multiple perspectives and exchange ideas, creating a sense of reciprocal exchange and learning from the exchange. It also shows students that their existing knowledge, experience, expertise, languages and cultures are valued. Promoting an intercultural orientation in the course involves getting 'the most important conversation we should be having' started, but importantly the intercultural orientation of the course reinforces the message that this dialogue always starts with oneself. Becoming intercultural communicators and globally minded individuals is a process of taking into account the 'first hand' accounts of others that previously students might only have experienced through the second-hand representations of others, such as those they are exposed to in the media.

To capitalise on the process of reciprocity tutors develop a rapport, getting to know students by name and learning a little about their interests and expertise, building up a profile of each individual both as a student and as a *person*. This includes getting to know their linguistic and cultural profiles. Teachers then encourage students to reflect on their personal experiences of interacting in diversity in relation to concepts covered in the course, in ways that might be relevant in their linguistic, cultural, social and professional worlds. This also involves validating students' diverse ways of knowing, their expertise, and linguistic and cultural repertoires:

*Just getting them to feel confident about what they have to offer.* Which I think is probably a new, just a weird position for them to be in as a student, contributing so much to the material in the course. (Tutor, Australian)

I think the presentations really helped, because with the presentations they were able to put themselves right there, and talk about their own experience, *and the fact that they were getting questions really made them feel like their experience was worth it to be discussed in class, and that gave them more confidence* in evaluating these experiences as experiences of intercultural communication. (Tutor, International student, multilingual)

What was more interesting for me was that they really got the idea that intercultural communication does not have to be among people from different cultures necessarily, from different ethnic backgrounds, and even the students who had not even been abroad, some of them they had not even been interstate, they were able to write amazing ... they were saying in the essay, 'At the beginning of this course I did not know', no they said '*I thought I didn't have a culture at all*'. (Tutor, Australian, multilingual)

Coming from the perspective that students are already members of multiple social, cultural and professional groups, teachers elicit examples from students of their experiences of navigating diverse languages, cultures and knowledge systems in their day-to-day lives. For example, if they work in hospitality or retail, students discover they have experience of using 'registers' (Blommaert 2013), a concept explored on the course to explain how people use language differently in different contexts and with different people. In other words, the students could apply this concept to the different ways they use language in their workplace according to the context and who the interaction was with. Foregrounding students' experiences and valuing their knowledge and expertise in this way creates opportunities for learning through reciprocity, as students have to explain to others their 'insider' knowledge. Teachers extend this exchange of knowledge by encouraging students to ask questions of one another and contribute their ideas for making connections with key course ideas. This approach gives recognition to the reality that all students bring to learning their own ways of knowing, communicating and being, and are not developing intercultural capabilities from a baseline of zero.

#### 4.2.4. The role of reflexivity

The intercultural orientation to teaching and learning in the course also involves another process, reflexivity. This process involves inviting students to consider how their emerging understandings of the subject matter might influence what they do next. The following interview extracts provide an illustration of how students understood this:

*It gives you another lens to see everything through. It's not just what I've learnt and studied, you can write essays for any kind of topic, but it's very, very few essays that you write that you take something from it. So it's a lot more than words, it's applicable, you can apply it to things. It resonates and stays with you. So I think with that it's just given me a new lens to see what I would have seen before, it's putting words to what I otherwise would have found to be a regular day to day thought. I'm doing a double degree in International Relations and Social Work. For me, the degree, I can go anywhere with it really. Like with the international side, it's very politically based, the example you used was perfect, I can see there's intercultural communication in everything that goes on worldwide ... I guess it gives, you have more compassion, more compassion and understanding. You're able to acknowledge and see that there's differences, you know what tools to use, just different ways and better ways. (Domestic student)*

*The course really opened my eyes and mind to new concepts on how to view the wider world. I feel confident, now, to communicate with any other persons, as I can employ what has been taught in the course. (Course evaluation response)*

As these responses highlight, students understand that they are presently and increasingly will be required in the future to function in contexts of linguistic and cultural diversity, both in and beyond university. The 'tools' or intercultural learning capabilities they develop through reflection, noticing, comparing, accounting for the multiplicity of perspectives in play, considering their own and others' reactions and responses in interactions, and the role of reciprocity were seen as relevant, applicable and employable, providing them with understandings and skills they could use in their social and academic lives now and as professionals in the future. Having alternatives and being better equipped to navigate diversity *interculturally* is seen as giving them an edge in their professional lives.

Students understand reflexivity in terms of concrete ways they can act as effective intercultural communicators, as illustrated in the following interview extracts:

*I would feel more equipped to propose a solution or a way forward in a situation that is perhaps not running as smoothly. I think I would be able to state things much more clearly and confidently, because some of these issues are quite polemic and contentious, and it's very easy for other people to be very upset about these subjects. Whereas at least now with having some of this theory, I feel able to stand up much more strongly, and perhaps propose alternatives. (Domestic student, Australian, multilingual)*

*I think it's helped me to not assume too quickly and maybe to not give a statement but ask questions, even if I think I know what they're saying, maybe still question it. So that's definitely helped me to communicate and understand what they're trying to say. (Domestic student, Australian)*

*I think it was after week 3, I started to think a lot about my interactions with my friends as well, and I just started thinking about my past. All my knowledge and stuff. It was quite interesting really, I'm learning something new as well. Through our interactions and conversations and all that, it definitely has helped I'd say. It's just made me think more deeply about issues and stuff. I think it matters because it helps us to understand better. I guess it solves a lot of problems. Like conflicts I'd say. How we see things, like maybe say this person thinks 'This is not right', but*



people from other countries think that it's OK. I guess that's the main goal I suppose, I'm not too sure. Just to reach a better understanding. (Domestic student, multilingual)

These extracts highlight students' emerging understandings of their developing intercultural capabilities as the acquisition of practical 'tools' for understanding the perspectives of others, and most importantly, using this understanding towards reflexively understanding themselves in relation to others, and making themselves understood. Students reported that using these tools, or managing reflexively what is going on in interactions enables them to navigate tensions, to develop and confidently propose alternative solutions, to delimit conflict and to mediate understandings.

However, reflexivity is not only a matter of thinking what they might do next in the light of concepts they have learned, or objectified knowledge, but of *doing* intercultural communication in vivo in the tutorial classes. This is highlighted in the following interview extracts:

Our tutor gives a lot of time for us to express our own views and to share our views, which I think is a really important part of the course actually, because if it's about intercultural communication, you need people to be able to communicate in that kind of safe, accepting environment so people can be themselves. Usually it follows the topic for the week, whatever the subject matter is, let's say 'diversity' or 'language'. Then our tutor will basically ask us, or pose a question, a very open-ended question, so that we have a lot of room to move with our answers, and yeah, everyone's free ... I can see that some of the international students, you can see that they're keen to understand Australians in general. And actually our tutor, she's also an international student. I'm not sure if she's studying here, she herself is from Italy, so she's only been here for a year I think. So actually the interaction with her is probably the most interesting for me. I'm a very open, direct person and she's also very hands on and, I mean she has a different way of expressing herself, which, actually there's been some interesting situations. We've talked about it very openly, where she has used a phrase or a word, and she has understood it being one thing, whereas I personally observed that looking around at the people, they may not have understood what she meant. So I've made a point of saying, 'Do you actually mean this?' and she's said 'Yeah, I meant that' and I've said 'It's my impression that other people thought you meant this, am I right?' and people on a number of occasions have said 'Yeah, we didn't actually understand'. So she's like 'Oh, OK, thank you for that' and we've been able to sort of overcome those sort of intercultural differences. (Domestic student)

Well actually there was a presentation we did and we were supposed to talk about an experience of intercultural communication, and we were supposed to reflect on that experience, and who we were and who we felt we were, our position before the interaction, and then upon reflecting upon it, who we were after that interaction. And it was a shared presentation, so I actually did it with another guy in the class, he's also like a white Australian, he grew up not far from me, but we're actually part of very different cultures. I'm almost twice his age. Our presentation, the experience we chose, was a conversation that we ourselves had had. We met to talk about what we would do for the presentation, and we ended up sitting and talking for a few hours and talking, and opening up all these dialogues about religion, about pop culture, about a lot of things, and we said, 'You know what, this is actually a good thing to base it on' So we reflected on what we took from that experience, and then we presented it to the class. So I benefited from that. (Domestic student)

Here, reflexivity is a key aspect of the experiential learning on the course, as students experience interacting within and across diverse knowledge systems, sharing and discussing the multiple perspectives in play, thinking about how they and others react and respond in communicating with one another.

Tutors commented on how they saw reflexivity being played out in students' discussion groups and assessments because of the intercultural orientation of the course, which consistently requires students to ask themselves, 'What next?'

One student talked about how it's changed the way she, it made her think about the ways she views and internalises how people look and behave, and she used to feel distant from people that didn't fit the standard, or the category that she'd put them into, but now she realises that she was subconsciously categorising. *Now she's really aware of how she responds to people.* (Tutor, Australian, multilingual)

But then in his reflection he said about how, after making those connections with the literature, and he said 'Now I really regret not taking that opportunity. I think I really missed out on knowing those guys as people because of the way I categorised them and dismissed them and all that sort of stuff and I think I missed out on two really good friends'. And I said 'Well the fact that you said that in front of everyone in class' and I said 'If that's not reflexivity I don't know what is'. The fact that you can look at yourself and think, *'How I did things then, I would do differently in the future'*. (Tutor, Australian)

From the teachers' perspective, an important part of developing their intercultural capabilities is incorporating reflexivity by encouraging students to consider how their reflections might inform their ways of thinking, speaking and acting now and in the future. In this way, learning is both an intellectual endeavour as students acquire a conceptual framework for analysing their personal experiences of intercultural communication, and something relevant and meaningful that they feel is worthwhile and applicable in their social, cultural and professional lives.

This section has discussed how an intercultural orientation to teaching, learning and assessment involves:

- understanding oneself as an example of diversity
- recognising the role of learning and socialisation in how we make sense of what is going on, and ourselves in relation to others
- recognising the value of reflection in relation to one's own and diverse others' knowledge, ways of knowing, perspectives on knowing, positionality in relation to knowing
- recognising the value of reciprocal exchange, which acknowledges diverse knowledge systems and the multiplicity of ways a phenomenon may be understood, and gives voice to others who may otherwise not be heard
- integrating reflexivity – thinking about and doing, how learning influences our next move and our understanding of ourselves and our knowing in relation to others.

## Chapter 5 Evaluations of the course

This section brings together the perspectives of both students and teachers on how they themselves summed up their experience of the journey of the course, and what this meant for them.

### 5.1 Evaluating an integrated approach to teaching, learning and assessment

In general, students commented positively on the overall coherence of the course:

There's like a structure. I find that with say, [student mentions another undergraduate course], if it's not very well structured it kind of goes everywhere. And that's what I like about this. I know, *I feel prepared for class, because I know I can answer the questions. I know I can be more confident in how I'm going to approach anything.* So I think this class took out the anxiety of 'God, I don't know what I'm going to have to talk about'. I think that adds to the whole environment of the classroom. For myself, *I'm prepared and I know what I'm saying, I'm a lot more comfortable and I'm a lot more confident to speak to other people and to the class as a whole.* So I think, yeah, having just the one reading is really nice. (Domestic student, multilingual, migrant)

Whereas in this course it will be the first week and they'll talk about this paper, but then they'll say, 'In the aspect of intercultural communication that's what this means'. Then in the second week, she'll go 'Last week we talked about this, this week we're talking about this, and that's what this means' and *they compare like this, this and this.* And then *all the assessments that we've done so far have been around comparing all the academic data that we've been given,* and I think that's a great advantage. (Domestic student)

In another course when we finish one topic, I feel like I might not have learnt everything, and I feel like 'Oh do I have to keep doing it a bit more or more thorough or something?' Whereas this course, you just keep going with the same main idea, but there's so many other things, but you can always go back to it whenever you want. *It doesn't feel like you're losing anything.* Yes? It's a weird feeling but it's good. (Domestic student)

I think if other courses did that then maybe we would feel like we were *continually learning and everything is related rather than separate.* (Domestic student)

*I feel like everything is of value and useful that we do.* When you learn something in class you can use it in your assignment or something like that, whereas in other courses sometimes you have a big set tutorial that you go through everything and there's a bit too much information that might not be relevant to specific assignments or something. *I always think back to what assignments I have to do and they're the ones that get graded, that's the more important thing so I've got to focus on that.* Which is maybe why some people don't go to tutes, it they aren't linked to the assignment maybe. (Domestic student)

These interview extracts highlight how students value being able to see coherence and relevance to what they are learning, particularly when each part is seen to be contributing to a bigger picture that makes sense to them in relation to where they are in the course, and where they are heading in their program. This integrated approach reduces uncertainty and anxiety for students, increases participation and creates confidence and a sense that students are developing their knowledge and expertise in meaningful ways.

## 5.2 Evaluating an intercultural orientation to teaching, learning and assessment

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this was a core undergraduate course within CIL, and therefore students came from a variety of degree programs, including but not limited to, Journalism, Media Arts, History, Sociology, International Relations, with some students planning to be future educators. The following responses illustrate how students see the intercultural orientation of the course as relevant to their degree and necessary as future globally minded professionals in an increasingly interconnected world:

Highly useful in making us aware of intercultural communication taking place and what that means. I think this is a necessary course in today's global marketplace and will enable those who study it to navigate the world (particularly the post-uni employment world) more successfully than they may have without it. (Course evaluation response)

So the reason why I'm studying Media Arts is because I think that the current ways that people in groups are represented is unacceptable ... this course has actually been surprisingly pleasant and I've quite enjoyed it, and that's because for me as a person I am constantly thinking about how other people are being represented. And it's hard because a lot of minority groups get stereotyped as incapable to be in leadership positions, so they don't get it, and then they can't represent themselves to be able to explain who they are and put forward an image of them being OK. So for me it's always been crucial if I do continue with Media Arts, I want to tell stories from the perspective of people who don't usually get to tell their own stories. I think the course has only further encouraged me to start up conversations with people about their culture and things ... and *I think that intercultural communication encourages people to begin these conversations, because I think that education is paramount. And not just textbook education but just learning in general about people and life, and I think that intercultural communication has encouraged people to begin learning about things that are beyond textbooks. About fellow human experience and how that differs for everyone.* (Domestic student)

I think the content is really good. Yeah, I think it will definitely help in other courses. I just like how it's structured. It gets you to think a bit more. It just gives you a lot of ideas. It just goes into your head. Yeah, *I think that really helps on the creative side as well.* I'm doing Media Arts, so I think that it will help expand your mind a little bit. *You can come up with more ideas and the more you learn the more you can give.* (Domestic student, multilingual, migrant)

It gives you I think *a way of being a critical thinker.* So in that way you could then explain to somebody else, what's *not* being said ... It gives you that bit of critical thinking, and then you can say to other people *'Well this hasn't been said, and have you thought about that?'* because you've thought about it a bit more critically. And so from my point of view, I'm a graphic designer, and I'm doing Media Arts, it gives you, so when you're doing something that has to be communicated to a large group, *you can make sure that you're not making assumptions that could be wrong, and also it then gives you the language to say 'This is why I've done it this way'.* It gives you that way of talking about why you've done a design a certain way or pitched certain things, to achieve something. So it gives you ... a bit more of the language, rather than 'I just thought it would be really good to do it like this'. *It just gives you that little bit of an edge to be able to explain something professionally.* And also *to critique what you're seeing too.* (Domestic student)

For me it was during the beginning because it hit me that *this has just got so many layers,* particularly when I was reading about the 'registers' and 'categorisation'. For me I realised that, going into a career of journalism, I'm going to be interacting with so many people from different cultures, and *being able to understand what's underneath the first judgement is really important in portraying them right, rather than wrong,* in writing news articles and stuff. And also *it will*

*help me to interact when I'm interviewing someone or I can, I guess, change the way that I do it, based on what I've learned about the person.* (Domestic student)

Here students express how, through the intercultural orientation of the course, they are able to develop capabilities related to critical thinking, stepping out of preconceptions, creativity, problem-solving, abilities to pitch and persuade, and above all, to understand and represent others more equitably, which they understand as highly relevant to them in their current or future professional lives.

### 5.3 Evaluating the personalisation of learning

The focus on personalisation during this course involves the acknowledgement that students bring to their learning their own knowledge systems (which are framed by their languages and cultures), and their own linguistic and cultural repertoires, experiences and interests. This focus has provided opportunities for experiential learning, peer-to-peer learning, the exchange of knowledge, the development of critical thinking and the expansion of both students' and teachers' horizons. In general, it has been evaluated positively by both teachers and students, as illustrated by the following interview extracts:

This is one of the few tutorials where there's been a lot of talk. Most of the time my experience has been the tutor talks a bit and then says 'OK, let's talk about it' and there's deathly silence. So being in the smaller groups has helped that. *How it's helped in my personal intercultural communication is because that way we're actually talking to other students, which you don't normally get to do in a tutorial.* But it's more about *personal experience*, so you do learn about, so in that sense you are *seeing it from somebody else's point of view*. *Just different life experiences which we would never normally get just in a tutorial.* (Domestic student)

And even *hearing international students' experience*, you wouldn't necessarily hear that in a tutorial in other classes. It's a great way to get to know other students. Because a lot of the course you have to reflect on your own experience, talk about it, use that as examples, which you don't, well it might come up in other tutorials, but it's not the focus of it. *So people are tending to share things.* (Domestic student)

[Pair work for assessments] I think you do learn more. It's always such hard work with group work but I think it's really good. For instance, being a mature student, *it gives me the possibility of working side by side with the younger students, which I really value*, and they're really good at bringing in, in believing that any kind of idea, they can make it happen, which has made me a bit quicker on my feet. So that's really good I've really enjoyed that aspect of it. (Domestic student, multilingual)

So I guess for me the light bulb moment is, it really does work, help, for students to share their experiences in a small way together first before they get up and share it in front of the class, because they can support each other. But it's amazing the amount of fear and trepidation there is around group work, if they've had previous experience at uni. I had a number that came up to see me to say 'I'm very worried about group work, I've had bad experiences in the past' (Tutor, Australian, multilingual)

These comments highlight how the personalisation of learning and the focus on interactivity and experience, language, culture and communication is not always foregrounded in the same way in other courses and yet students and tutors consider it to be valuable.

This personalisation generated a sense of being not only an observer, but also learning as a participant. It was seen as something that could be important and relevant in other degree programs, as the following interview extracts point out:

Domestic student: I mean there's a lot of things that you could have as fundamental subjects for people, but I think intercultural communication is definitely one which could be and would be very useful for people studying pretty much any course. I mean it doesn't really matter what course you're doing, you're always going to have to interact with people from different cultures, people from different backgrounds, different countries, so it doesn't matter what you're doing, you still have to take part in it. It's not like you'll never have to engage with other people. I think definitely one of the important things that people should be, need to be a bit more aware of, is with the general thoughtfulness of it, and just being more aware of how intercultural communication works. And just getting an understanding of it, and just thinking about it and trying to interpret it in their own means. But I think definitely bringing a sense of awareness to the topic is something which is a key pull-away from the course overall. So I think if there's one thing that people in other degrees should try and get acquainted with, it's just being a bit more aware and being a bit more conscious of how intercultural communications take place and what goes on in these interactions. And how they see them taking place and how they participate in them. Yeah, and just how their world, how their entire social world goes on. So yeah, I think that's one of the key things. Not so much changing the way that they do it, but thinking about it. That reflection. And also an anticipation, looking into the future as well is so important.

Researcher: So not just reflecting back? Reflecting forward.

Domestic student: Not just reflecting back, but reflecting back and then using those reflections to aid you in the future in future interactions.

Tutor: But yeah, I think it's really important to make people think there isn't a wrong or a right answer, it's more trying to get 'How do we come to that position?' and 'What are the ways?' again, with reflection, and drawing on these ideas, it's all about making them more aware about language and the ways we use language, and how culture influences our language.

From the teachers' perspective, it was considered essential to think of students as *people*, who bring with them their own experiences and ways of knowing, and their own linguistic and cultural repertoires, which can be drawn upon to develop their awareness and intercultural learning capabilities. From the students' perspective, it was considered valuable in this course and beyond to become effective intercultural communicators through learning to use the processes of reflection, reciprocity and reflexivity. The sense of anticipation, of not only 'reflecting back', but also 'reflecting forward', was significant, as students understood the journey of the course as contributing to a future in which they could see themselves as better equipped to participate and belong in contexts of increasing linguistic and cultural diversity.

## 5.4 Conclusion

In making sense of their experience of the course, students and tutors highlighted a sense of their situatedness in their own languages, cultures and knowledge systems, and how important this is to all students in their diversity, in terms of their integration into the culture of academic life, and of belonging more broadly in the world:

I'm a first year so I only started uni less than a year ago, and I was saying to one of my friends the other day, 'If I met myself on the first day of uni, I'd be like 'Who is this guy?'" I've changed a lot since the start of uni, and I feel like this course is just helping with that change. Probably more

than some other courses, because History is more like an intellectual change because it's learning about, it's more *empirical*, data, whereas this is more *changing as a person*. (Domestic student, Australian)

As Australian citizens I feel that we have an obligation to accept other cultures because we are multicultural, so this course allowed us to understand that more and accept people from different cultures, and it's made me realise that there is no one definition of Australian citizen, because people come from so many different countries and migrate here, but they don't fit the category of an Australian citizen, but they are. So because we are a multicultural country we need to have these techniques, integrating with other people. (Domestic student, Australian)

*I think it's something you build on over time. We're not going to learn everything we need to know right now. It's just a stepping stone that we now, that this course, we have this basis, we have the bare necessities now and we can build on that. A foundation, and go on to ... I think it's something that you never really complete. You're not going to be the best at it, you're not going to reach an end of that. It's going to forever evolve.* (Domestic student, Australian)

These extracts exemplify how students have experienced the course as a foundation on which they can continue to build their intercultural capabilities in dialogue with others, which for many was perceived as the beginning of something personal and profound. From the students' perspectives, this is important for adapting to the new culture of university life, and even one's life as a citizen. Here, integrating is not seen as something other people who 'migrate here' must do in order to belong, but a continuing process in which everyone is implicated. Developing intercultural capabilities is not accomplished with one course at university, but is understood as an ongoing project (see sample student Review, Appendix 2), a conversation. For these students this conversation has begun with a different way of understanding themselves in relation to others as they develop knowledge and ways of knowing in learning in contexts of linguistic and cultural diversity.

## 6 Findings and recommendations

The overarching finding of the study is that to enable students to develop intercultural learning capabilities and academic literacies, there is a need to rethink notions of ‘experience’ and ‘engagement’, and specifically to attend to the central role of language/s and culture/s in the experience of learning, teaching and assessment on the part of all students.

The findings clearly apply to the course: Intercultural Communication. However, given the central role of language/s and culture/s to learning and the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity among students, they have broader relevance, providing the basis for recommendations that potentially apply to all undergraduate courses across the disciplines.

### 6.1 In relation to language, culture and learning:

#### Finding 1

That an attentiveness to the crucial role of language/s and culture/s in shaping how concepts are interpreted and how understandings and new knowledge are created, developed and applied is necessary and valuable when learning and teaching in diversity.

Rather than being containers for information, language/s and culture/s are the vehicles of particular knowledge systems and understandings that shape interaction in learning. Learning is a process of interpreting and meaning-making. It occurs in ongoing activity in interaction with others that extends beyond linguistic and cultural experiences, and introduces new ways of understanding and doing things. Learning and teaching in contexts of linguistic and cultural diversity inevitably involve processes of interpreting and meaning-making in which multiple languages and cultures will be in play.

In learning, students draw upon their whole repertoire of linguistic, cultural and knowledge experiences in the service of increasingly complex learning. Learning emerges through linguistically and culturally mediated, historically developing practical activity (Gutiérrez & Rogoff 2003). Advancing students’ learning therefore begins with a consideration of students’ linguistic, cultural and knowledge repertoires and the trajectory of their experiences, both in education and beyond.

In the ongoing development of Intercultural Communication as a core course, the recognition of the central role of plural languages and cultures in learning is evident in:

- the tutors’ desire to come to know the students and their language/s, culture/s and prior knowledge, understandings, values and dispositions
- an ongoing attentiveness to language/s and culture/s in learning and to advancing students’ academic learning through scaffolding, which is both conceptual and linguistic
- an invitation to share personal knowledges, acknowledging subjective as well as objective knowledge, and to question assumptions in coming to understand the situatedness of knowledge
- the foregrounding of diverse knowledges and ways of knowing
- the emphasis on reflectivity and reflexivity



## Recommendation

There is a need to support teachers across all disciplines to develop a deliberate focus on how to attend to and capitalise on the centrality of language/s and culture/s in learning by:

- recognising in a more deliberate way that some students work with and seek to interpret and create meaning through at least two linguistic, cultural and knowledge systems, and that their learning involves complex processes that incorporate translanguaging, and in particular, translation in learning. In this sense the goal is not only to develop literate capabilities in academic contexts, but multilingual literacies
- encouraging and supporting translanguaging/translation; recognising the complex processing involved; and the value of students coming to understand these processes and thereby developing metacognitive awareness of what it is that their learning through the medium of English in the context of Australia entails
- encouraging all students to appreciate the crucial role of language and cultural situatedness of learning and knowing

## 6.2 In relation to learners, the experience of learning and the personalisation of their learning:

### Finding 2

That students' intercultural learning capabilities are developed through opportunities for experiential and personalised learning in interaction, in which students engage with their own and others' diverse knowledges, experiences and understandings and participate reciprocally in exchange.

Intercultural learning capabilities are developed by experiential, personalised learning. Experiential learning that occurs in interaction with others opens up the possibility for discovering that the same experience of knowing and learning may be interpreted and understood differently by diverse individuals. The personalisation of learning takes place when learning opens up the possibility for students to respond to and make sense of new knowledge in ways that are personally meaningful.

Opportunities for experiential and personalised learning enable students to develop awareness that their own understanding and knowledge are based on the history of their own experiences of socialisation and enculturation, and the resulting assumptions, perspectives, knowledge and values. Opportunities to exchange their experiences, perspectives and knowledge in interaction with others enable students to critically examine and challenge their own and others' assumptions, knowledge and understandings, to consider multiple perspectives, and reflect on the interpretation, creation and application of knowledge.

In the ongoing development of Intercultural Communication as a core course, understanding learners, the experience and personalisation of learning is evident in:

- the desire to come to know the students as learners and as persons
- the deliberate foregrounding of interaction in diverse linguistic and cultural groupings

- the attention to personalisation by inviting students to draw upon their own experience, perspectives and knowledge in exploring key concepts
- a deliberate focus on capturing multiple perspectives in knowing

### Recommendation

There is a need to support teachers across all disciplines to develop a deliberate focus on the use of experiential and personalised learning by:

- giving greater attention to the life-worlds and experiences of diverse learners through a systematic process of profiling students
- accessing students' knowledge and expertise more deliberately in relation to the concepts of the discipline/course
- developing greater attentiveness to students' experiences and developing experiences through the course that mirror the use of the concepts being learnt as they are used in the professions which students are entering
- building on students' reactions and responses in ways that recognise heterogeneity
- continuing to promote collaborative, reciprocal learning
- inviting tutors to consider: what does/can this mean to students, that is, recognising that learning is not only about acquiring knowledge and participating in the activities of the particular discipline/s but attending to meanings – how they are interpreted and created.

### 6.3 In relation to curriculum design:

#### Finding 3

That the design of the curriculum be coherent in the sense that intercultural learning as described permeates all aspects of the curriculum and its enactment.

When it is made explicit how each aspect of the curriculum contributes to the whole, and when engagement with the experiences typical of the discipline, diversity and intercultural learning permeate the course (its goals, teaching and learning experiences, assessment processes, reflectivity and reflexivity and evaluation), students understand their experience of learning as coherent, meaningful and relevant.

Such experiences include:

- a consistent and sustained focus across the curriculum on reflection and reflexivity that makes visible the value and limits of own/other knowledge and perspectives and developing self-understanding in diversity
- a consistent and sustained process of linguistic and conceptual scaffolding in learning, teaching, assessment and feedback to students
- explicit connections drawn across concepts and themes discussed each week

In the ongoing development of Intercultural Communication as a core course, coherence in curriculum design is evident in:

- the focus on reflection, reflexivity and the experience of diversity, in both the subject matter and the process of the course
- the conceptual connections that have been systematically built into the sequence of lectures and tutorials (the nature of connections made between the set of lectures that set out the conceptual field and the set that provides instantiations/exemplifications could be strengthened and extended)
- the ways in which assessment is integrated into the sequence and invites further experiential learning

### Recommendation

There is a need to support teachers across all disciplines to develop a deliberate focus on how to developing a coherent curriculum design which facilitates intercultural learning by:

- providing students with opportunities for reflectivity and reflexivity on their experiences typical of the discipline and of linguistic and cultural diversity at all points of the course
- providing students with linguistic and conceptual scaffolding throughout the course
- asking students, through assessment processes, to demonstrate evidence of connections across the concepts and experiences of the course as a whole.

## 6.4 In relation to managing a core course

### Finding 4

That coordination extends beyond the administrative aspects of ‘managing’ the course to include *developing shared understandings* of the conceptualisation and design of the content and processes of the course, teaching and learning processes, experiences and resources, and assessment and evaluation.

The notion of ‘developing’ is highlighted here because the goal is not necessarily to develop a singular, common understanding but rather, it is important to share diverse understandings and come to appreciate the different understandings that students themselves will bring. There is value in deliberately seeking to draw out diverse perspectives. As explained by Clarke (1997):

... all knowledge is invested with pre-judgements... ‘fore-understandings’ and that without preconception and anticipation knowledge would be impossible. Thus, attempts at understanding ... must involve not an obliteration of difference, but a rapprochement .... A ‘fusion’ of conceptual horizons, involving the self-awareness of difference, the recognition of the other, even the alienness of the other (p. 13).

Ongoing dialogue through the course meetings constitutes a form of ongoing professional learning for all involved. It affords an opportunity for mutual discussion among tutors that has the potential to add value to student learning, as well as their own. It is in this sense that at all levels, learning is reciprocal.

The weekly team meetings to discuss how students were interpreting and making sense of their learning provided a forum for developing such shared understandings. They were a forum for debriefing and planning, for example, discussing the diverse ways students might experience the

course, the scaffolding that became necessary. They also provided a forum for discussing assessment processes and for sharing and moderating students' responses to the assessment tasks.

In the ongoing development of Intercultural Communication as a core course, the emphasis on team meetings to plan and debrief can be extended to include a critical discussion of the nexus of knowledge/s, curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment – and the mediating role of language/s and culture/s in all these processes. In this way students and tutors develop a meta-language to talk about the distinctive activities and their experience of the particular discipline/s. In addition, the research dimension introduced on this occasion might become a deliberate process of inquiry into the teaching and learning of the course in the context of diversity.

### **Recommendation**

There is a need to support teachers across all disciplines to develop a deliberate focus on how to:

- develop shared understandings and approaches to learning, teaching and assessment through dialogue, collaboration, reflection and reflexivity during the life of a course
- develop a metalanguage to enable teachers and students to talk about the distinctive experiences/activities of the course and their experience of the particular discipline
- sustain a process of inquiry into the teaching and learning of a course in the context of linguistic and cultural diversity

## 6.5 In relation to academic and professional literacies

### Finding 5

That attending deliberately and explicitly to language/s and culture/s is an integral part of developing the literate capabilities students need in academic and professional environments.

The development of students' academic and professional literacies depends to a large extent on the understandings that students and tutors have of the relationship among language, culture, knowing and learning – as discussed in relation to the finding presented at 6.1. It is significant to note that many multilingual students will be developing literacies in multiple languages that will enable them as graduates to study and practice in their professions in and beyond English-speaking countries.

### **Recommendation**

There is a need to support teachers across all disciplines to develop a deliberate focus on how to:

- understand within and across disciplines the crucial role of language/s and culture/s in developing academic and professional literacies for diverse students
- sustain a deliberate focus on the development of academic language and professional literacies recognising the complexity for multilingual students as they develop such literacies across more than one language and culture
- recognise that all students, whether they are multilingual or monolingual, will as graduates, increasingly be expected to be professionally literate in contexts of linguistic and cultural

diversity both at home or abroad, and preparing for this requires an intercultural orientation to learning, teaching and assessment.

## 7 Conclusion

The experience of working collaboratively in the life of the Intercultural Communication course has highlighted the ways in which curriculum design, teaching, learning and assessment are processes that are social, linguistic and cultural in nature.

Discussions for all participants in this learning and teaching study – students, tutors, lecturers and the researchers – inevitably involved a network of assumptions about knowledge/s, ways of knowing, valued knowledge/s and what counts as valued knowledge, particularly in the context of diversity. They also involved consideration of the relationship between learning, teaching, and assessment and desired academic literacies, and their relationship with curricular knowledges. The collaborative processes established to manage the course and the research implemented in the 2015 iteration enabled the exploration of different conceptions of knowledge and how these are enacted in curriculum design and teaching, learning and assessment practices, on the part of individuals and collectively. Delandshere (2002, p. 1462) highlighted the importance of this process:

Until we come to grips with, or at least frame the issue of knowledge and knowing in ways that can guide education practices (including assessment), the enterprise of education runs the risk of being fruitless and counterproductive.

The importance of the conceptualisation of knowing within or across disciplines of knowing as the basis for curriculum design, learning, teaching and assessment, cannot be overstated. The research overlay allowed the diverse conceptualisations to come to the surface and to be discussed by the group of participants; in other words, it facilitated a meta-level discussion of the experience of the course. This discussion uncovers assumptions about prior knowledges (epistemologies and linguistic and cultural resources) and experiences that students and tutors bring and develop through a course. It challenges ways of considering 'difference' and the ways in which these are drawn upon or perpetuated in learning, specifically the ways in which course experiences can open up (or not) opportunities to demonstrate and further develop their learning.

Finally, and importantly, the discussion illustrates intercultural learning as an orientation that attempts to see learning as an act connected to issues of meaning – and how meaning is interpreted and created in the nexus of knowing, teaching, learning, assessing, language/s and culture/s.

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## 9 Appendices

### Appendix 1 Referencing resource

#### **Slide 1: What is referencing?**

Referencing is a practice that has been undertaken for hundreds of years. There is evidence that referencing existed as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The examination of texts from different cultures will show us that referencing conventions vary in different contexts. In some cultures, who came up with a particular idea is really important and they have to be acknowledged. This can be observed in Western academic settings. In other cultures, how creatively an idea is communicated is given importance. It is possible to demonstrate both in our writing. We can tell a logical and critical story about a topic and this can be done creatively. We can make this more credible by including what others have said about the same topic. By doing this we also enable a discourse with the authors of the original idea. Whichever way it is done, referencing allows interaction to take place between the writer and others who have written about a similar topic. Moreover, by identifying the voice of others, we make our own voice or position clear.

#### **Slide 2: Becoming a member of a community**

Each discipline in the University is made up of a community. When we enrol in a study program whether it is Education, Applied Linguistics, International Studies or Media Studies, we become a member of that community. This community is called a Community of Practice and all of its members will do things in a particular manner such as writing in a certain style or employing particular referencing conventions. Although we may have used referencing in a specific manner in the past or maybe even not have used it at all, in our current context we have to follow what our Community of Practice recommends. As members of our Community of Practice, we work towards building and refining an understanding of the world we live in through the many practices we undertake including referencing.

#### **Slide 3: Disciplinary knowledge and writing**

The information that we obtain from texts we read are usually discipline specific. Although the core ideas may be the same, where the text is published and the language it is written in can impact on the way the information is communicated. This goes back to the earlier idea about how referencing is undertaken differently in different cultures. Sometimes we may come across texts published in a different language that is relevant to what we are writing. The referencing conventions in these texts may vary from what we are usually used to. If we use the information from these texts in our writing, we have to acknowledge this in the convention that is recommended by our Community of Practice. So what we will be doing is using the information we obtained from another culture to suit the cultural practices of our own community.

#### **Slide 4: Referencing and the texts we read**

The weekly readings we are assigned in our courses are not facts to be memorised but perspectives to consider and evaluate. Rather than memorise and recount the debates that occur in the texts we read, we need to learn to engage in the conversation so that we can explore, test and develop our understanding. When we are asked to do an assignment at University, our task is to read widely, analyse, reflect on and evaluate everything in order to form our own perspective while remaining attentive to the perspective of others. Fundamental to this is demonstrating that we can engage in the process of 'critical thinking'. Being 'critical' does not mean being negative or criticising what is being said about something. It is a process of careful and deliberate examination of ideas, reasoning, assumptions, positions, perspectives and their implications. This helps ensure that our understanding and actions are based on ideas that are sound.

#### **Slide 5: Referencing and writing**

Referencing is therefore a reflection of how we have engaged with the ongoing academic conversation: the back and forth between *the writer* and other authors in the field. Referencing is the tool that we use in writing to:

- show our readers who we have engaged with in order to consider an issue;
- explain the ideas and perspectives we think are relevant for understanding an issue;
- position ourselves on an issue by explaining how *our* understanding confirms, contests, or extends the ideas developed by others; and
- demonstrate that our position is based on the credible findings of others.

Referencing in our writing also demonstrates our continuous development as a student as they show our readers how well we have engaged in the relevant and important literature on a topic.

Importantly, referencing also serves to acknowledge the hard work of other members in our Community of Practice. They spend a lot of time and effort investigating issues so that the world can benefit from their findings and perspectives. These researchers and thinkers have to be acknowledged for their efforts when we use and build on their ideas in our own work. While we need to evaluate their perspectives critically, we also need to respect their contributions.

#### **Slide 6: Examples of referencing**

Look at the two texts. Which of these provide the reader with a good reflection of the academic conversation the writer is engaging in? Which of the texts lends credibility to what the writer is saying? Which of the text offers the reader the opportunity to further explore particular aspects of the discussion? Which of the texts demonstrates the writer's acknowledgement of scholars who have investigated the phenomenon discussed in the paper?



### Text A

Two dimensions of cultural variability are relevant for communication behaviour in conflict management. The first of these is the well-researched individualist–collectivist dimension (see Hofstede 1980; Hui 1988; Triandis 1995), according to which individualists focus on individual goals, needs and rights more than community concerns. On the other hand, collectivists value in-group goals and concerns, with priority given to obligations and responsibilities to the group. According to the seminal work of Hofstede (1980), Australia and other Western nations measured high on individualism, whereas East Asian nations such as Singapore and Thailand measured high on collectivism. This is confirmed in more recent studies of values, with Western nations clustering nearer to the individual pole and most East Asian nations toward the social pole (Smith, Trompenaars & Dugan 1995) and similarly separated along the conservatism–egalitarian dimension (Smith, Dugan & Trompenaars 1996).

Source adapted from: Brew, FP & Cairns, DR 2004, 'Do culture or situational constraints determine choice of direct or indirect styles in intercultural workplace conflicts?', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 28, pp. 331-352.

### Text B

When discussing the role of culture in conflict management, it is important to consider where people in the conflict come from. Those people from Western contexts are more prone to decisions or reactions that involve only themselves whereas others from Asian contexts operate as a group. In a

## Slide 7: Why Text A?

Which of the two texts did you choose? If you chose Text A, then you are on the right track. In Text A:

1. The writer introduces the ideas they think are relevant for the issue they're discussing.

3. The writer also demonstrates the extent to which these concepts and authors 'agree' with each other. This establishes a body of knowledge that the writer can then build on.

### Text A

Two dimensions of cultural variability are relevant for communication behaviour in conflict management. The first of these is the well-researched individualist–collectivist dimension (see Hofstede 1980; Hui 1988; Triandis 1995), according to which individualists focus on individual goals, needs and rights more than community concerns. On the other hand, collectivists value in-group goals and concerns, with priority given to obligations and responsibilities to the group. According to the seminal work of Hofstede (1980), Australia and other Western nations measured high on individualism, whereas East Asian nations such as Singapore and Thailand measured high on collectivism. This is confirmed in more recent studies of values, with Western nations clustering nearer to the individual pole and most East Asian nations toward the social pole (Smith, Trompenaars & Dugan 1995) and similarly separated along the conservatism–egalitarian dimension (Smith, Dugan & Trompenaars 1996).

2. The reader gets a picture of the research 'context' and is able to identify which authors are important, and how well-established these concepts are. Citing these sources also adds credibility to the discussion, as they demonstrate the writer understands the area.

Although Text B puts forward a coherent argument, it is not clear if the assertions are based solely on cultural stereotypes or perhaps the writer's own personal opinion. The assertions would be more credible and convincing if they drew on established theories or research findings.

The reader also cannot determine the disciplinary context for the discussion, that is, the particular scholars and perspectives the discussion draws on. The reader is therefore not able to meaningfully engage with what is said or follow up on the points raised.

## Slide 8: How do we organise our reading and note-taking to ensure good referencing practices?

\*This slide adapted from Monash resource

It is a good idea to get into the habit of recording all the information about a source at the time that we are taking notes from it. The most common problems in referencing are caused by forgetting where an idea was found or losing the odd scraps of paper on which the referencing information was written. We should think of referencing as a critical part of our learning and not just something to be added on at the end.

## Slide 9: When do we reference?

When we refer to other people's ideas in our writing, we have to reference it. We have to include an in-text reference whether we paraphrase, summarise or quote someone's ideas or thoughts. In-text citations need to be accompanied by a full reference, placed in the list at the end of our written assignment.

Look at the following examples of in-text references:

Summary (brief overview of the main point/findings of a text)

At least two intercultural studies on conflict and negotiation ([Chan & Goto 2003](#); [Drake 1995](#)) found that people did not choose a conflict style in line with their cultural values when in conflict with others from different ethnicities to themselves.

Paraphrase (a more detailed description of an idea, in our own words)

[Goto \(2003\)](#) found that Hong Kong employees were more cautious with a Hong Kong superior but more confrontational with superiors from the US and mainland China, which Chan and Goto (2002) attributed to the ingroup or outgroup distinction.

Quote (restatement of a point, using the author's exact words)

[Chan and Goto \(2003, p. 25\)](#) found that choice of conflict resolution style by Hong Kong Chinese was 'contingent on the ethnic identity of the other party in that they only adhered to expected norms when dealing with other Hong Kong Chinese', not with mainland Chinese or Americans.

#### **Slide 10: Where do we place the in-text citations?**

We do not just place all our citations at the end of our sentences because we are expected to. In-text citations have important roles to play. The location of our in-text citation in the discussion, can communicate particular messages. For instance, if we place our citation at the beginning of a sentence we are drawing the reader's attention to *who* said a particular idea. By doing this we give the author of that idea prominence. For example:

### Author prominence

[Chan and Goto \(2003, p. 25\)](#) found that choice of conflict resolution style by Hong Kong Chinese was 'contingent on the ethnic identity of the other party in that they only adhered to expected norms when dealing with other Hong Kong Chinese', not with mainland Chinese or Americans'.

The reader's attention is drawn to whose idea this is.

If we place the citation at the end of a statement, then we are drawing the reader's attention to the information, thus giving it prominence. For example:

### Information prominence

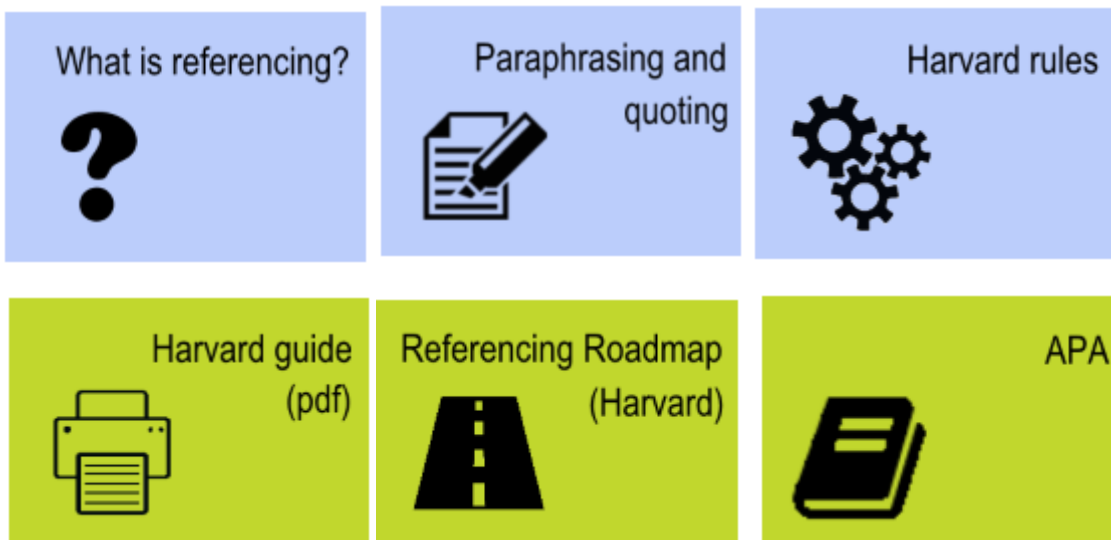
The choice of conflict resolution style by Hong Kong Chinese was 'contingent on the ethnic identity of the other party in that they only adhered to expected norms when dealing with other Hong Kong Chinese', not with mainland Chinese or Americans' ([Chan and Goto 2003, p. 25](#)).

The reader's attention is drawn to the information

There is no fixed rule to specify when we would give the author or information prominence. We have to be the judge of that and decide what is it that we want our readers to focus on.

### Slide 11: Resources to help you with your referencing

The general referencing convention used in UniSA is the UniSA Harvard Referencing style. However, schools have particular styles that they expect their students to use. It is always good to confirm with our tutors about the referencing convention we have to use. There are many referencing resources that will be useful for this course. These can be accessed by clicking on the icons.



Slide 5:

Referencing forum



Academic Integrity  
Module



Using Turnitin



## Appendix 2 Assessment tasks

### Assessment #1 - Review (Graded)

Write a review of one of the articles from weeks 1 to 4 (1. Scollon, Scollon & Jones; 2. Blommaert; 3. Heugh or 4. Leuder, Marsland & Nekvapil).

Choose one of these readings to review:

1. introduce the key ideas of the article
2. explain how the author understands key terms (e.g. How does s/he understand 'culture' or 'intercultural communication'?)
3. summarise the main points made by the author in the article in your own words
4. outline the examples/evidence the author uses to illustrate these points
5. in doing so, refer to the perspectives taken in two other articles from weeks 1–4
6. consider how the article furthers your understanding of intercultural communication

Assessment criteria for the task (These are the things that you will need to show in your writing to successfully complete the task):

1. Ability to explain key ideas covered in the readings
2. Ability to structure a response
3. Clarity and accuracy of expression

### Assessment #2 - Seminar presentation (Graded)

Presentations will be done in pairs, commencing in week 6, at a time negotiated with your tutor. You will have 15 minutes for your presentation and 5 minutes for questions and discussion. We invite you to be creative in presenting your ideas. The presentation is based on your experiences of intercultural communication, either as a participant or as an observer. In preparing for your presentation, you will need to record the detail of such experiences in terms of:

- roles
- the nature of the interaction
- the intercultural dimensions of communication
- your/others' responses.

For your presentation, you and your partner present and discuss two experiences of intercultural communication that you have had, one for each presenter. Drawing on ideas from the course, the course readings and your own experience/interests:

1. explain why you chose these experiences as examples of intercultural communication
2. describe what you observed during the experiences (about yourselves and others)
3. discuss your reflections on what it is that was going in these examples of intercultural communication
4. consider together how these experiences and reflections have affected your thinking about yourselves and others and what is involved in intercultural communication

## Assessment criteria for seminar presentation

1. appropriate selection and description of an experience of intercultural communication
2. demonstrated understanding of key ideas and relevant readings
3. appropriate organisation and clarity of presentation
4. appropriate/creative use of audio/visual technologies
5. evidence of reflection and reflexivity

## Assessment #3 - Essay (Graded)

In your essay you are required to explain your understanding of intercultural communication. Drawing on ideas from the course, relevant literature (including course readings) and your own experience/interests, describe and reflect on three experiences that you have had of intercultural communication. One of these experiences could be the same as the one you presented in Assessment 2.

In your essay:

1. introduce the key ideas that will inform your reflections on your experiences
2. explain why you chose these experiences as examples of intercultural communication
3. describe what you observed during the experiences (about yourself and others)  
With reference to relevant literature:
4. discuss your reflections on what it is that is going in these experiences
5. suggest how these experiences exemplify intercultural communication in the contemporary world
6. consider how these experiences and reflections have affected your thinking about yourself and others in intercultural communication, including language, culture and communication.
7. attach your observation notes on the three examples of intercultural communication to your essay as an appendix.

As part of this assessment task you will develop a one page essay plan to be discussed with your tutor in the tutorial, week 10. You will need to:

1. outline the key ideas that will inform your reflections on your experiences
2. identify the three experiences of intercultural communication
3. include a list of key references from relevant literature
4. bring your essay plan to class in week 10 to workshop in groups/discuss with your tutor
5. include notes/ideas from the workshop into your essay plan to show the development of your ideas
6. submit your essay plan and notes with your essay

It is strongly recommended that internet sources be kept to a minimum and then only if referencing factual/statistical information or the reference pertains to an online academic journal.

Criteria for assessing the essay:

### Content

1. evidence of reflection and reflexivity
2. demonstrated understanding and use of relevant literature
3. quality of argument developed and conclusions drawn

## Structure

1. clear structure (an introduction that presents the focus and main arguments, a body that presents and illustrates the main points and shows how they relate to the task, and a brief conclusion)
2. appropriate referencing (in text referencing of material used from other authors, accurate list of references)
3. appropriate use of language conventions such as grammar, spelling and punctuation.



Assessment #1- Article Review: Blommaert

This paper will be reviewing the article 'Citizenship, Language, and Superdiversity: Towards complexity' by Blommaert and exploring the key ideas made by the author with reference to articles written by Scollon et al and Leudar et al. This paper aims to discover Blommaert's understanding of intercultural communication and what constitutes superdiversity.

Blommaert's article explores the diverse and complex nature of superdiversity and the impact of such within society. Concurrent to this, Blommaert believes that superdiversity is the driving force altering the concept of citizenship today and the ways in which intercultural and inter-linguistic relationships are formed (Blommaert 2013, pp.193-195). The foundations of Blommaert's arguments derive from his key concepts of polycentricity, registers and the intricate and multifaceted nature of citizenship and the varying methods into the integration of such (Blommaert 2013, pg.194).

Blommaert's understanding and contextual grasp of superdiversity and what it entails is complex and has several subcultures that intertwine and intercept one another such as the concept of polycentricity. Polycentricity and in turn a polycentric environment, according to Blommaert, is a number of cultures reshuffling their norms in order to adjust appropriately to different situations (Blommaert 2013, pg.194). Blommaert suggests this adjustment to dominant cultures or situations occurs through the use of personal registers (Blommaert, 2013, pg.194). Registers are multiple, personal repertoires whereby one can acquire several normative orientations in order to conform to the dominant culture (Blommaert 2013, pg.194). The definition of citizenship within this article derives from Blommaert's view that migration has greatly influenced and diversified what constitutes citizenship today (Blommaert 2013, pg.193).

In the article, Blommaert makes reference that integrating into a dominant culture requires more than just learning the dominant language, but rather he suggests it is necessary to learn the cultural norms, values and social abilities in order to integrate and be accepted into ones new culture successfully (Blommaert 2013, pg.195). To illustrate this idea, Blommaert uses the example of the pressures felt by immigrants to adhere to all cultural expectations that are on them when they move to the said dominant culture. He argues that the concept of the complexity of integration is closely linked to what society classifies as 'citizenship' (Blommaert 2013, pp. 193-194). He made a strong point that this view/approach into integration as 'inadequate' as it is more than learning a language, rather to integrate, in order to live everyday life and not feel like an 'outsider', one must also learn the social and culture norms, values, views (Blommaert 2013, pg.195). He suggests one must be fluent in drawing from different registers relative to the situation, such as work, education, gender or age (Blommaert 2013, pg.195).

Rather than focus individually on his key concepts, Blommaert understands them as a whole; as a complex and intricate web where each concept runs concurrent to another. For example, his understanding of the nature of polycentricity is that social lives are not objected to one hierarchical norm, but to be subjected to many norms both competitive and complementary (Blommaert 2013, pg.194). He refers to the complex nature of polycentricity as a reshuffling of norms that are drawn

from personal registers. Blommaert further argues that the use of registers in the polycentric century through adjusting ones identity is vital as he argues that people belong to various cultures and therefore it is a complex web of drawing from one register to another, depending on the situation (Blommaert 2013, pg.194). This is a key example of how intertwined Blommaert's understanding of key terms are, as one is not explained without the presence or introduction of another. A consistent theme throughout his article was that there is an alternative perspective on everything and that each person's view differs accordingly.

As identified, Blommaert's main points in his article were the complex and extensive nature of superdiversity as well as the use of registers in everyday life (Blommaert 2013, pp.193-195). These arguments have been supported by both Scollon et al and Leudar et al's articles.

Both Blommaert and Scollon et al outline the global impact the introduction and use of the Internet has had on superdiversity as well intercultural communication as a whole. Blommaert remarks the introduction of the internet as creating a 'network society' in which communication can occur long distance, without boundaries (Blommaert 2013, pg.193). Scollon et al provides support for Blommaert's view regarding the Internet by perceiving the introduction of the Internet as being a method and platform in which people can connect in new ways that have the ability to transcend national, linguistic and cultural borders (Scollon et al, 2011).

Scollon et al reinforces Blommaert's key concept of registers through a similar concept of cultural tools discussed in his article (Scollon et al, 2011). Both share similar attributes as both registers and cultural tools are methods in which the enabler can draw upon when identifying certain cultural situations and identifying to particular social groups. Both concepts pull from personal repertoires of information appropriate to the context of a situation.

Both Scollon et al and Leudar et al provide support for Blommaert's perspective on how learning a language alone is inadequate as they argued that language is ambiguous and thus can lead to miscommunication (Scollon et al, 2011), (Leudar et al, 2004). Scollon et al uses the example that there is never complete agreement among speakers of a language and thus relying on language alone is not enough to successfully understand, integrate and accept intercultural communication and relationships (Scollon et al, 2011).

Leudar et al further reinforces Blommaert's argument on the complexity of language in particular about the effects of having a polycentric environment on indexical language (Leudar et al, 2004). Blommaert argues this can result in confusion, judgement and misinterpretation of information (Blommaert 2013, pg.195). Leudar provides support for this in his article through his argument of 'us and them' and how one individuals view and use of language can differ from the other (Leudar et al, 2004). Both articles share the similar view that language and the ways in which it is utilised can be interpreted and understood varyingly from person to person.

On several occasions Blommaert makes reference to personal anecdotes or uses himself as the author as an example of what a certain concept means, such as the illustration of polycentricity and the use of registers in day to day life (Blommaert 2013, pg.195). Scollon et al used a similar perspective in his article to demonstrate different methods or cultural tools one could use. He provides the example of the way in which one would converse with their boyfriend in comparison to their grandmother to support this idea (Scollon et al, 2011). Similarly, Leudar et al provided the example of how the use of the word 'freedom' by president George Bush and Prime Minister Tony

Blair, had a different meaning in comparison to Osama's use of the word, thus reinforcing the concept that language can hold different meaning depending on the context (Leudar et al, 2004).

Although each scholar used different examples, language and anecdotes, they still shared the same key ideas and principles. Each author highlighted how language can be interpreted and understood in a complex and varied notion.

The rich and deep exploration of ideas from all authors both individually and collectively raised personal awareness of how I communicate, what registers I draw from and what I constitute as being an effective way to communicate with an intercultural perspective. It is an ongoing process of learning to better understand myself and others and all three readings have provided me with cultural tools that I can add to my personal repertoire of understanding the complex and diverse nature of intercultural communications.

In comparing and reviewing each article and the methods each scholar used, this essay in itself highlights the complex and intricate nature of intercultural communications. By recognising the diverse nature of superdiversity and the use of registers, we have accepted and acknowledged how although some authors uses different examples and different wordings, they still showcase and share the same ideas. The three articles exemplify how intercultural communications is comprised of not only intercultural relationships but also inter-linguistic relationships too.

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## Appendix 4 Sample of student response to Assessment 3/Essay

Intercultural Communication has introduced me to new ideas, revealed layers of concepts I was previously familiar with, and modified my original perceptions of particular notions. The course has allowed me to re-establish my own feelings, thoughts and opinions in a comprehensive way, by encouraging reflection on my instinctive communicative habits, behaviours and experiences. The following essay includes reflections on my actions, thought-processes and personal experiences that correspond with the theory taught across the course curriculum.

My first personal reflection regards how I determine and justify my own personal cultural identity, as an Australian with Italian ancestry, and a connection to Argentinian culture. Throughout the reflection, the key ideas that will inform my experiences are in relation to; migration and diversification (Heugh, 2013), defining culture, culture as a verb and cultural values (Scollon, 2011), and the notion of belonging within a context (Blommaert, 2013). The reflection also discusses terms such as superdiversity, polycentricism and dis-citizenship. I have chosen to discuss this ongoing experience as it has been relevant throughout my whole life. It has been a part of my identity that I have assessed and explored personally, and also discussed with family and friends.

Determining your cultural background is a prominent aspect of life in Australia. As a polycentric society, Australian culture is increasingly defined by the sub-cultures that have developed with migration, and that have created a 'superdiversity'. My whole life, I have had an attachment to Australian culture, Italian culture and Argentinian culture. I was born and raised in Australia, to an Argentinian born father and Australian born mother. However, people often look past my link to Australian culture and Argentinian culture as they believe my 'blood' is Italian, as both my father's parents and mother's parents are Italian-born, with Italian ancestry. To me, cultural association or identity and 'blood' are different. I have always thought of myself as Australian more than anything, and Argentinian just as much as Italian. This has nothing to do with nationality or geography, but rather, the presence each of these cultures have in my everyday life, and what I *do* that maintains their presence. Defining culture as 'not something you think, possess or live in, but something you do' (Scollon, 2011) during the intercultural communication course was something that strongly resonated with my feelings regarding what constitutes my own cultural identity.

I consider myself Australian, with both Argentinian and Italian background. People often challenge my claim to having an Argentinian background, as my only connection to the country is that it was my father's birthplace. I often find myself having to justify why I consider myself 'Argentinian', and the notion of culture as a verb perfectly validates my stance. Despite being Italian-born, my grandparents grew up, were educated, married, and started a family in Argentina. Argentinian cultural values have had a strong prominence in my life; my grandparents still speak Spanish amongst themselves and to my dad, cook Argentinian food and listen to Argentinian music.

Throughout the course, we discussed how people belong to different cultures in different contexts (Blommaert, 2013). When travelling overseas, I am viewed as Australian, but in Australia, I am viewed as Italian-Argentinian. I have noticed that belonging to different cultures in different contexts is not only relevant when travelling overseas, but also occurs in different circumstances at home in Australia. The following personal anecdotes demonstrate how 'people are able to make sense of their own identity and that of others from the cultural values available to them at a particular time and place' (Crichton, 2015). When I am at my grandparents' house celebrating 'Dia del Padre' (Father's Day), enjoying an Asado (Argentinian barbeque), and listening to Latin music, I draw from my Argentinian

culture more than ever. Just as when I am at an Italian wedding watching my Nonna dance to the 'tarantella' or helping my family make sauce on 'sauce day', I feel a strong connection to my Italian culture. As my Argentinian culture and Italian culture are emphasised at specific times, it shows how 'culture exists as a resource or commodity which can be appropriated randomly or strategically to meet the individual's needs' (Chaney, 2001).

Through integrating with Australian culture, my Argentinian and Italian culture has been 'Australianised.' Although we are gathering for an Argentinian barbeque, my dad and uncles are yelling obscene Australian slang at the footy on the TV, showcasing their passion for AFL. This is similar to when my whole family gathers at my Nonna's on a Sunday night, and our traditional Italian dinner is interrupted by my cousin organising our annual family Melbourne Cup sweep, for the race that stops the nation. This exemplifies Australia as a polycentric society. I am not just Italian or Argentinian, I am Italian-Australian and Argentinian-Australian. These anecdotes highlight a strong linkage with the following; 'In an increasingly interconnected world, cultures are increasingly intertwined and people often constitute their cultural identities by drawing on more than one culture' (Schultze-Engler, 2008).

By observing the way my father is perceived by different people, migration challenges and the notion of dis-citizenship become apparent. His experience highlights Heugh's discussion of how one must manage difference with their own 'original' culture and integrate with new culture (Heugh, 2013). My dad migrated to Australia from Argentina at the age of eight and while he maintains aspects of his Argentinian identity, he has integrated into Australian culture; from his fluency in English to the way he upholds Australian values. This integration into Australian society has resulted in his family and friends in Argentina viewing him as Australian, rather than Argentinian, and shows how 'signs of citizenship will increasingly also count as signs of dis-citizenship' (Blommaert, 2013). Although those in Argentina see him as Australian, his friends in Australia view him as Argentinian. This can lead to the feeling of not belonging to any culture, as those on the outside neglect relevant parts that make up his cultural identity.

My second personal reflection is based on my experiences of intergenerational communication. Throughout the reflection, the key ideas that will inform my experiences are in relation to; the use of cultural tools and drawing inferences (Scollon, 2011), shifting between registers (Blommaert, 2013), stereotypes and use of personal pronouns; 'us' and 'them' (Leudar, 2004), and borders (Khosravi, 2007). I have chosen to discuss this experience as it has been ongoing throughout my life, and something I experience on an everyday basis. I am also intrigued to further reflect on how the emergence of the internet has created superdiversity and increased interconnectedness (Blommaert, 2013) that has created a gap for intergenerational communication, but strengthened intra-generational communication.

Every day, I am active in intergenerational communication, as my family structure, like many others, provides a ready example. I am able to recollect a number of instances where communication and language with my grandparents of the 'traditionalist Generation', my parents of Generation X, and my peers of Generation Y differed, despite the conversation surrounding the same discourse. I notice that what sets these conversations apart the most is the way in which I use cultural tools, and the way I construct information in order to cater for others' ability to draw inferences.

A basic, yet relevant example of this is when I shared my plans to attend a concert, for a relatively popular band, with my grandparents, parents, friends and strangers. To my grandparents, I stated 'I am going to a concert on Saturday night.' I was sub-consciously aware they had never heard of the band, and therefore compromised the information to eliminate any confusion. To my parents, I stated the band's name but followed it up with informing them of popular songs they may have

heard, to help them identify who I was talking about. When speaking to my friends, I simply stated 'I am going to *the* concert on Saturday night', assuming they know the band, and know they are in town. To strangers of the same generation as me, I stated the band's name I was going to see, assuming they are aware of this band, but not completely confident in presuming they knew they were touring.

Professor Howard Giles states 'when people interact, they adjust their speech, their vocal patterns and their gestures to accommodate to others' (Giles, 1991). My personal example shows how the language I employed and content I chose to discuss differed in order to manage the similarities and differences I share with the different generations. When I chose particular culture tools to convey my plans, I was not only claiming the kind of person I was, but making claims about the groups others belong to too (Scollon, 2011). People must call upon their knowledge about the outside world in order to understand what words and sentences mean (Scollon, 2011) – aware that the knowledge of the outside world differed between these generations, I tactfully used cultural tools, adding or removing certain information and shifting between registers to share the same news, but in different ways. As stated in Blommaert; 'We select from our repertoires the registers that are functionally adequate within the specific niches in which we intend to deploy them' (Blommaert, 2013).

It is important to recognise my personal experience does not set any intergenerational communication benchmark, and it should be acknowledged that the reason for simplifying content and information when communicating with my grandparents is not only because of generational barriers, but also due to soft linguistic borders (Khosravi, 2007). The inferences and choices made based on the linguistic borders should be distinguished from the inferences and choices made based on the generational barrier. However, in Australia, these lines are often blurred as majority of older generations are of migrant background, and therefore, generational and language barriers often work interchangeably to create a new form of intercultural communication.

Generational groups have created their own social structure and set of cultural norms in which they exist. Different generations are categorised by a membership category device, i.e. 'Millennials' or 'Baby-Boomers.' These words or labels 'assign entities to a category and forces an interpretation that they have attributes associated with that category' (Crichton, 2015). There is a perception that all Millennials belonging to Generation Y are self-serving and narcissistic, and are mocked as 'Generation Why?' by older generations. This, however, presents another stereotype in itself, suggesting those outside of Generation Y such as Baby Boomers, are cynical and ignorant when it comes to future generations. As discussed through the Leudar and Marsland reading, stereotypes influence the way personal pronouns are used. In recent months, while on public transport, I observed a group of elderly women vocalising their feelings towards generation Y. In response to two teenage boys being loud and disruptive on the bus, one muttered 'kids these days, they have no idea.' This use of personal pronouns serves a negative implication, as we can see the woman had made an implicit division between 'we' and 'they' (Leudar, 2004).

It is interesting to reflect on how technology has impacted communication between generations; it has added complexity to intergenerational interaction, and strengthened intra-generational communication. The expansion of the internet and new media has created a superdiversity, and defined Generation Y. Generation Y are the most interconnected generation, due to this newly developed network society 'in which people live and act in relation to long-distance, virtual peers' (Blommaert, 2013). The internet and social media platforms have altered the mediums we use to communicate, i.e. Facebook Messenger is more prominent than a landline phone. I only use the landline phone to speak to my grandparents, and rarely have instantaneous communication with them as I would with a user of Facebook or Twitter. Not only have social networks strengthened

intra-generational communication by enabling frequent and instant contact, they have also developed new ways of communicating, and are sources for conversation content. The internet has developed new language, slang, and even a new sense of humour, fuelled by popular culture, memes, and viral media, that generation Y have inherited. This means I often feel as though I can have more relatable and perhaps, more successful communication with a stranger from overseas of a similar age as me, than my own grandparents who I have known my whole life.

My third and final personal reflection regards my experience working as babysitter for an Australian family, of Chinese background. Throughout the reflection, the key ideas that will inform my experiences are in relation to; soft borders (Khosravi, 2007), membership categorisation and stereotypes (Leudar, 2004). I have chosen to discuss this experience as it is still present in my life, and has caused me to change the way I think of some aspects of intercultural communication, such as stereotypes.

Since April this year, I have been a regular babysitter for this family, going to their house every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 5 and 8pm. When I mention to my friends or family that they are of Chinese background, I am straight away faced with them asking what the names are (presuming they are difficult to pronounce or 'typical Asian names'), if they have rice every day for dinner and if they are strict when it comes to their six year old completing homework. This relates to the use of membership category devices and how stereotypes are 'a category based on exaggerated and inaccurate generalisations used to describe all members of a group' (Leudar, 2004). What I have learnt over my time babysitting, coincides with the fact that stereotyping 'does not acknowledge internal differences within a group' (Crichton, 2015). Their children do not have what people would call 'typical Asian names', but rather mainstream Anglo names. They have rice or Chinese food once or twice a week, but also have a number of meals that are not Chinese (spaghetti Bolognese, sausages and mash). The parents are also not academically fixated or strict on their children, but rather relaxed and lenient. This challenges the stereotypes most people have of Chinese people.

When I babysit, I see an Australian family with a Chinese background, just as I see myself Australian with an Italian-Argentinian background. The family has integrated into Australian culture, while still showing signs of their Chinese culture, through the meals they sometimes have for dinner, and the way they have maintained the Asian custom of taking your shoes off when you enter the home. Soft borders show what is judged as 'normal' and 'abnormal' (Khosravi, 2007). I cross a border and enter a new space when I enter their home and take off my shoes, something seen as abnormal in my own home. Experiencing what it is like in the home of an Australian-Chinese family has combatted a number of Chinese stereotypes.

I was able to further my understanding of intercultural communication by identifying how ideas and concepts learnt throughout the course, have been active in my own experiences of intergenerational communication, determining and justifying my personal cultural identity, and combatting stereotypes. It has been a thought-provoking course that has encouraged personal interpretation and reflection. I highly valued how the theory covered enabled me to re-establish, validate and articulate my own thoughts and feelings in a comprehensive and academic way.

### **Word count**

2,453

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Chapter 1, extracts from pp. 1-24.



## Observation Notes

### *Exploring and assessing my own cultural identity (observation #1)*

- Australian with Argentinian and Italian background
- Always find myself having to justify my link to Argentina and Australia because I technically have all Italian heritage and do not have Argentinian or Australian 'blood' – argument is that we *do* many 'Argentinian things' and 'Australian things' that creates a cultural association and sense of belonging, regardless of where my ancestors came from
- Draw from my different cultures in different circumstances (i.e. feel more Argentinian at grandparents having Asado, feel more Italian on sauce day, etc)
- Have Australianised our own cultures; sport culture, customs, language, values
- Dad feeling like he doesn't belong as different people view him as Australian and Argentinian

### *Intergenerational communication (observation #2)*

- A conversation with my grandparents, parents, friends differs by the way I construct information
- 'I am going to *a* concert Saturday night' vs 'I am going to *the* concert Saturday night'
- I eliminate information as I know my grandparents/parents knowledge on the topic is minimum compared to my friends/other people my age
- Simplify information not only to cater for generational barriers but also due to the soft linguistic border that is present between my grandparents and I
- Stereotypes; generation Y are labelled narcissistic – experience on public transport where an elderly group of ladies were unimpressed by loud passengers who clearly belonged to Gen Y and said 'Kids these days, they have got no idea.'
- Technology's role in adding complexity to intergenerational communication (it has created a new language, slang, humour) and has strengthened intra-generational communication (instantaneous and frequent contact, interconnectedness, ability to relate to memes, viral videos, news, etc)

### *Babysitting for family with Chinese background (observation #3)*

- Chinese stereotypes; strict, fixated on academics, 'typical Asian' names, eating rice every night
- Being in the home of an Australian family with Chinese background has challenged a lot of these generalisations and stereotypes
- All three children have mainstream 'anglo' names, parents are very relaxed and lenient, eat a variety of foods, same values, language and humour as anyone
- Combatting/challenging stereotypes
- Soft borders – entering their house and taking shoes off is normal whereas in my house this is considered abnormal

## Essay Plan

### Introduction

#### Experience reflection based on observation #1: Exploring and assessing my own cultural identity

Discuss key ideas:

- Migration and diversification
- Defining culture and culture as a verb
- Cultural values/lifestyle
- Belonging within a context

Discuss Australia as a polycentric society, migration challenges faced by dad and dis-citizenship

Relevant readings: Heugh 2013, Blommaert 2013, Scollon 2011

Additional sources: Chaney 2001, Crichton 2015 lecture slides, Schultze-Engler 2008

#### Experience reflection based on observation #2: Intergenerational communication

Discuss key ideas:

- Use of cultural tools
- Shifting between registers
- Inferences and making claims about yourself/others
- Stereotypes and membership categorisation
- Personal pronouns; us and them
- Soft linguistic borders
- Superdiversity created by technology; internet interconnectedness impact on communication

Relevant readings: Scollon 2011, Blommaert 2013, Leudar 2004, Khosravi 2007

Additional sources: Crichton 2015 lecture slides, Giles 1991

#### Experience reflection based on observation #3: Babysitting for family with Chinese background

Discuss key ideas:

- Membership categorisation
- Integration
- Stereotypes
- Soft borders

Relevant readings: Leudar 2004, Khosravi 2007

Additional sources: Crichton 2015 (lecture slides)