



Issues Identified as Barriers to Intercultural Understanding

How Can we overcome these?

- ❖ **Facilitators prompts – these are examples picked up from discussions during the pilot phase**
 - How your use of language, body language, gestures and tone of voice may appear to people from different countries or diverse cultures and how theirs may affect your perceptions of them
 - ❖ Gestures – for example holding up one hand means stop in the UK but is considered rude in Greece
 - ❖ Use of hands when speaking
 - The possible results of a lack of understanding or ineffective communication tools
 - ❖ Students switch off if they don't understand
 - ❖ Teachers, interviewers, etc. do not get the best out of someone if they don't understand cultural differences. UK (Western) culture is to be succinct and get to the point. Other cultures value the background story or emphasising particular thing such as qualifications
 - ❖ There could be disagreements, misunderstanding about expectations, potential conflict
 - The politeness conventions used by yourself and the people from the countries or cultures you are working with and how these may affect people's perceptions of each other
 - ❖ The English use a lot of words to express politeness (lots of please and thank you) – this may seem insincere to others
 - ❖ Apparent rudeness of people who do not use the conventional words and expressions of politeness
 - ❖ Queueing!!!
 - ❖ Many nationalities will not use first names as they feel it is disrespectful – others may see it as unfriendly
 - ❖ Nigerians and some other African nationals will sometimes use terms like 'auntie' to convey respect – this may seem inappropriate in some circumstances

- ❖ Some people are used to speaking up, others to remaining quiet – this can be overcome through one-to-one, small group work and feedback, etc. so people come to realise they can speak up
- Ways to minimise misunderstanding and improve communication with people with a different first language to you
 - ❖ Listen closely and give the person time
 - ❖ Learn the conventions for introductions and greetings in your host country
 - ❖ Don't use own fluency as a way to overpower others
 - ❖ Hosts could learn simple phrases in migrant language if appropriate
 - ❖ Use gestures (carefully!)
 - ❖ Explain acronyms and technical language
 - ❖ Use pictures and diagrams
 - ❖ Check that they have understood or that you have understood correctly
 - ❖ Be careful with phrasal verbs (for example, the plane is "taking off")
 - ❖ Use body language when appropriate
 - ❖ Don't use idioms or slang
 - ❖ Those who are speaking a foreign language should not try to translate in their head as no language can ever be directly translated and this may lead to misunderstanding
- The challenges in communicating with people from another culture who share the same first language with you
 - ❖ For example differences in vocabulary, spelling, accent, expressions and directness – good example is difference between American English and UK English
 - ❖ English is the most common second language in the world but everyone learns it differently (in class, with an accent, from being in an English speaking environment, from family or friends) so it doesn't sound the same
 - ❖ In the UK, young people have adopted phrases and language from the US and the Caribbean which older people often do not understand
- Hidden rules in the workplace and education
 - ❖ Punctuality (signal of respect to arrive on time)
 - ❖ Assumption that roles are known and understood by the other person
 - ❖ Attitude (serious versus relaxed)
 - ❖ Assumed expectations
 - ❖ Ways we refer to each other – levels of familiarity
 - ❖ Hierarchy or lack of it