

Teaching English Africa webinar

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# Understanding the Value of Intercultural Communication in the Modern Classroom

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Saturday 10 February 2024

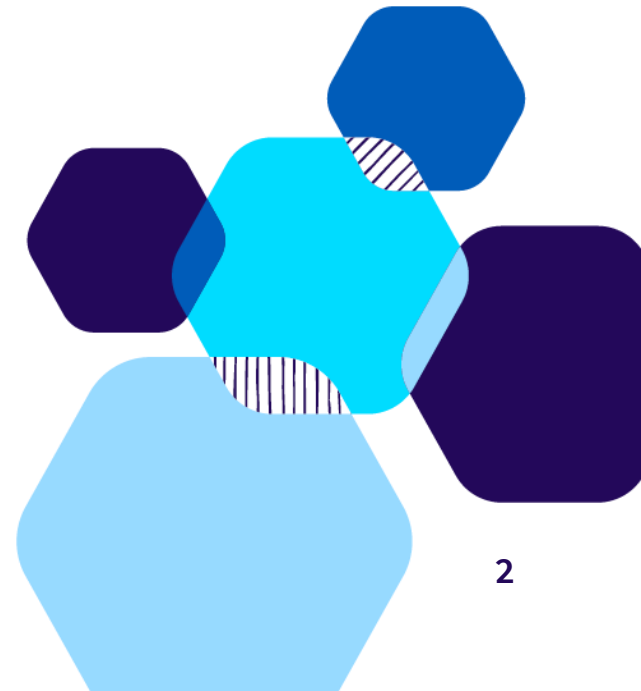


# My objectives

At the end of this presentation, participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of the significance of Intercultural Communication in the modern classroom.

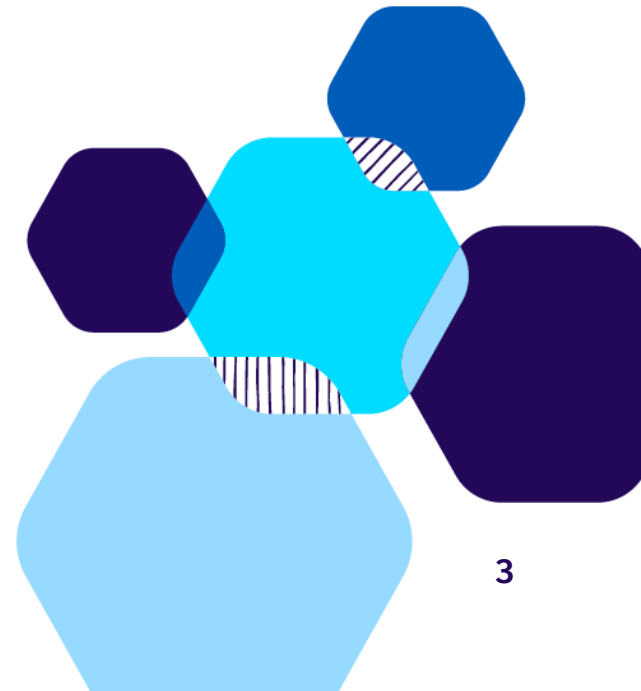
Through insightful discussions and practical insights:

- Participants will be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster a culturally inclusive learning environment.
- Enhancing their ability to connect with diverse student populations and effectively promote cross-cultural understanding within the educational setting.



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*Communication* is at the heart of our shared humanity. In an era where the world is more connected than ever, the power of IC becomes our bridge to understanding, unity, & progress



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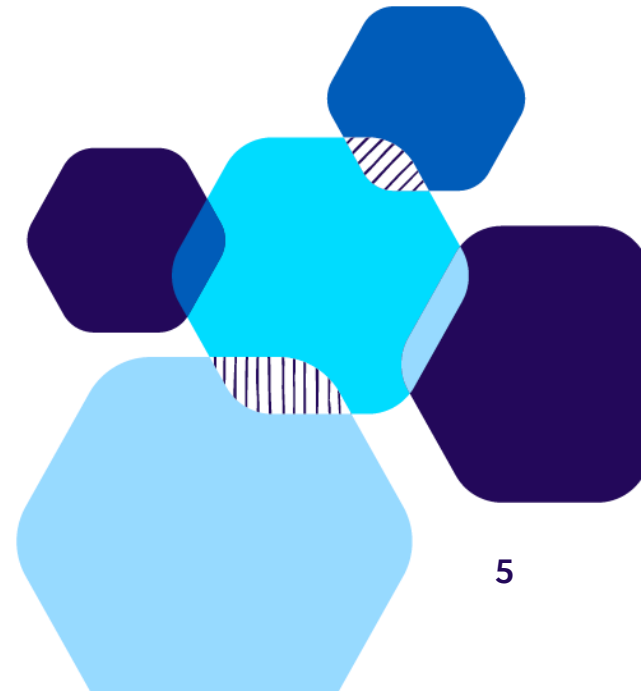
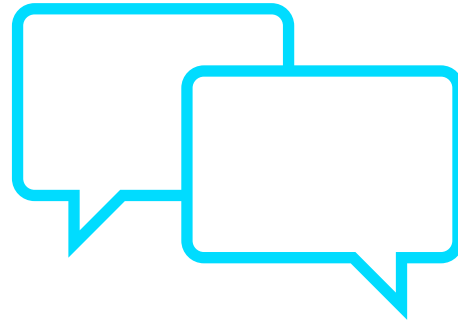
According to UNESCO, there are over 7,000 languages spoken globally, emphasising the incredible diversity in our interconnected world.

In the modern classroom, students represent a rich complexity of cultures, with over 20% of students studying outside their home country.



# How do we connect communication, language and culture?

Put your ideas in the chat box



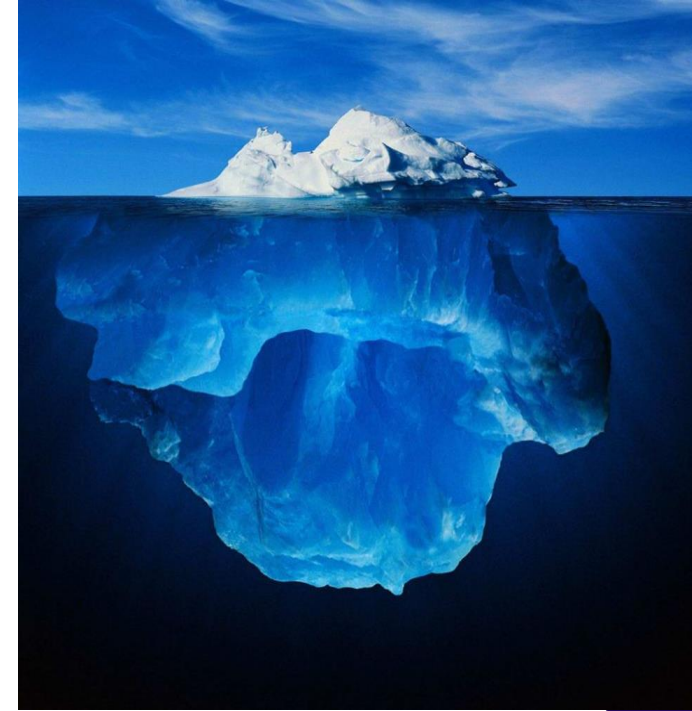
# How do we connect communication, language and culture?

- Communication links through language.
- Language carries cultural nuances.
- Exploring culture reveals the role of communication and language.
- Together, they shape the fabric of human cultures.



# Metaphor of culture

1. How is culture like an iceberg?
2. How do you learn about the things above the waterline?
3. How do you learn about the things below?
4. What happens if you don't know one or some of these things?
5. Which things are easier to change?
6. Why is it important to understand that there are visible and invisible types of culture?



Language, dress, food . . .

**Visible**

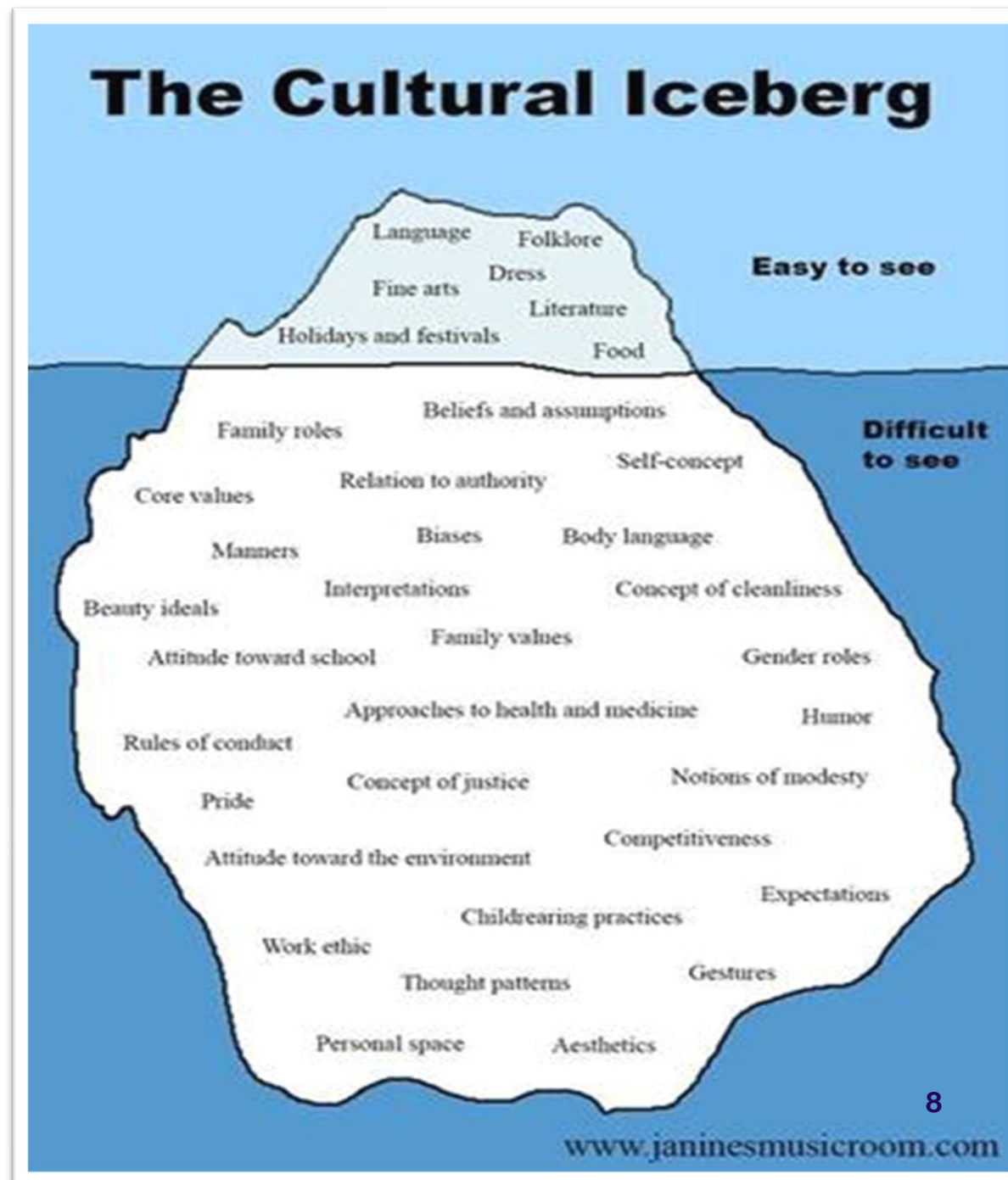
**VS**

**invisible**

**Family roles,**

**beliefs and**

**assumptions, work ethic . . .**







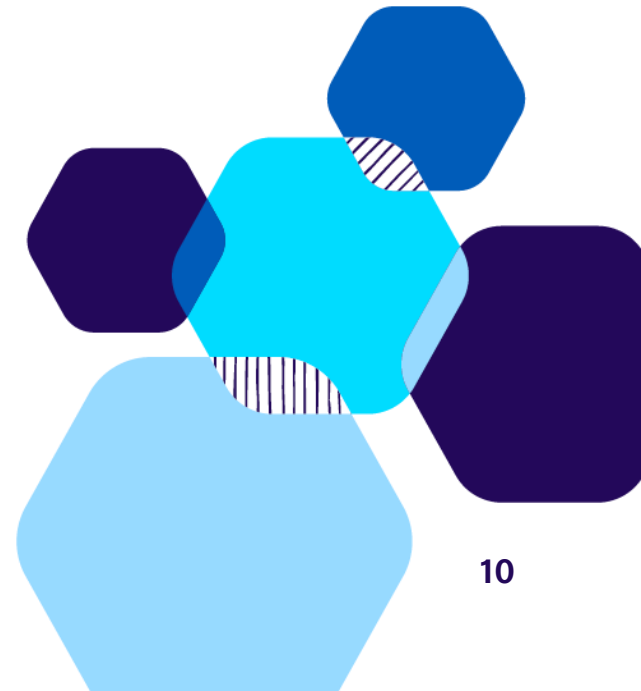
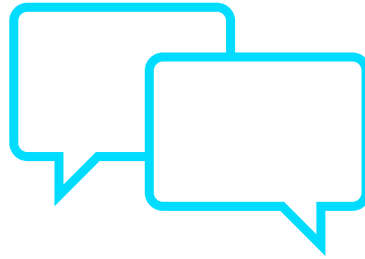
According to Johnson, Anderson, and Thompson (2015), 'Culture is much more than food, sports, and art. Culture is a system of shared values, beliefs, and attitudes that are learned by a group of people who primarily work and socialise together' (p. 150).

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# Have you experienced situations where cultural differences have influenced the teaching/learning situation - positively or negatively?

How do you currently incorporate cultural diversity into your teaching methods, & what successes or challenges have you encountered?

Put your ideas in the chat box



# Culture Vs. Interculture



‘Interculture, intercultural’, pertains to the interactions & relationships between different cultures.

‘Culture’ refers to the characteristics of a specific group.

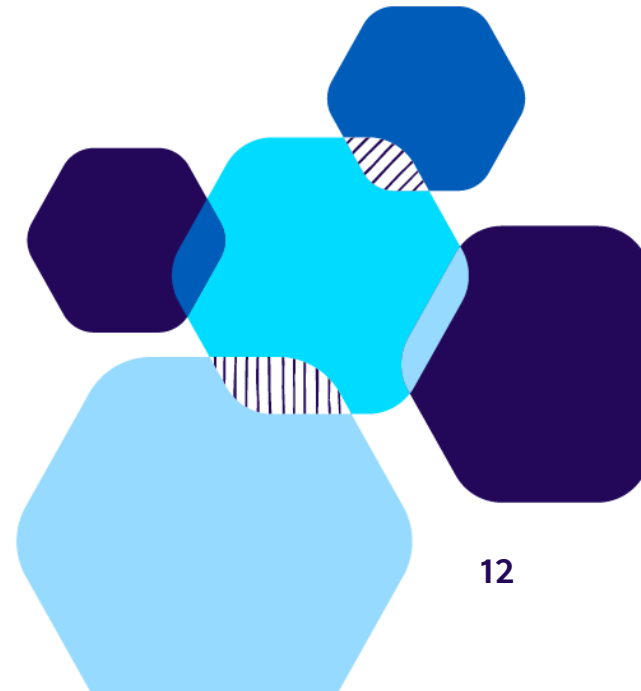
‘Interculture’ focuses on the dynamic interplay & communication that happens when individuals/ groups from different cultures come together.

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# Definitions of Intercultural Communication

**Samovar and Porter (2001) ‘Communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event’**

**Gudykunst and Kim (1997) ‘The communication between people from two different cultures’**



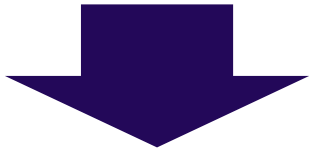
# Cross-Cultural Dialogues

- ✓ Pair participants from different cultural backgrounds (this could be online or via WhatsApp) and provide them with discussion prompts.
- ✓ I truly encourage open and respectful dialogue about your cultural experiences, beliefs, and values.

## Discussion Prompts

- ❖ *Cultural Traditions*
- ❖ *Values and Beliefs*
- ❖ *Language and Communication*
- ❖ *Perceptions of Time*

# IL vs IC



## Intercultural communication and Intercultural learning



**IL** involves acquiring knowledge about other cultures, understanding & appreciating cultural diversity, & developing skills to interact effectively with them.



# Why important to understand IC in the modern classroom?

1. Cultural diversity
2. Effective Communication
3. Enhanced Learning Environment
4. Global Competence
5. Conflict Resolution
6. Cultural Sensitivity



**Globally, the number of int'l students grew from 2 million in 2000 to 6.3 million in 2020 (source: Immigration Data Portal).**

# What are some of the crucial skills for effective intercultural communication?

Type your ideas in the chat box





# What are the skills for effective intercultural communication?

Understanding  
of the  
other  
culture

Empathy

Tolerance of  
ambiguity

Cognitive  
flexibility

Delay of  
evaluation  
of the  
behaviour of  
others

Problem  
solving skills

Relationship  
building  
skills

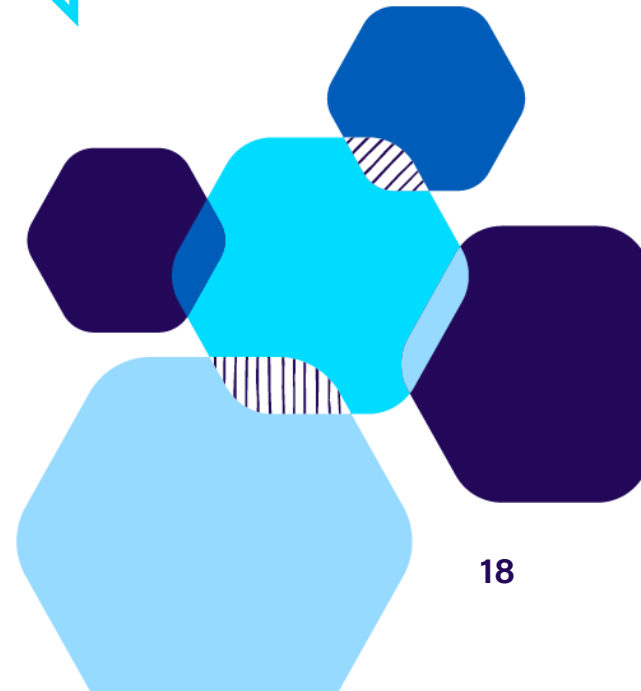
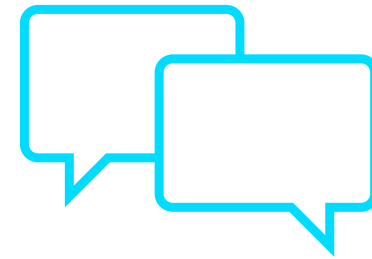
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# How can we as teachers ensure that multicultural diversity becomes an advantage rather than a disadvantage?

Have you experienced intercultural communication episodes - funny, strange, annoying, shocking etc.?

- What did you think in the situation?
- How did you react in the situation?
- How do you think about the situation and its consequences?

Put your ideas in the chat box



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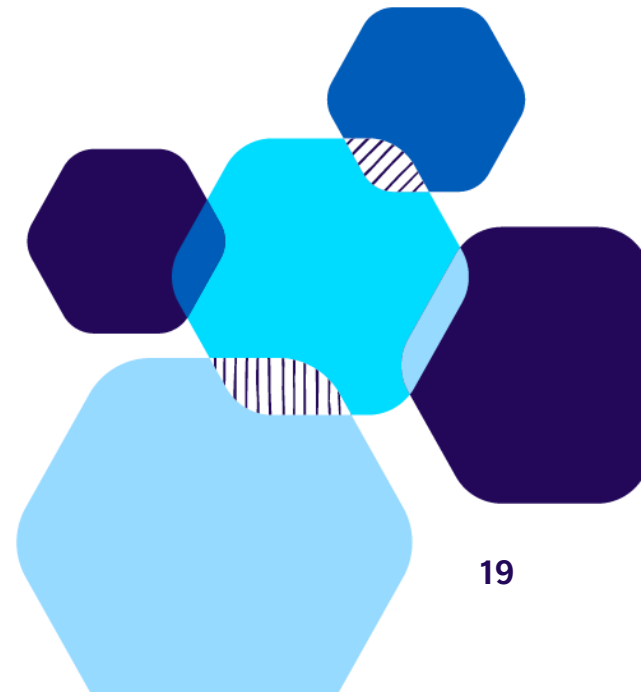
# Activities for ELT classes to develop intercultural understanding

## 1. Cultural Show-and-Tell

- Ask students to bring in an object or picture that represents their culture, or if they're all from the same culture, research objects from different cultures.
- Have each student present their item to the class, explaining its significance.
- Encourage classmates to ask questions and express their thoughts.

## 2. Cultural Interviews:

- Pair students from different cultural backgrounds – this could be online or through an exchange
- Ask them to interview each other about their cultural practices, traditions, and customs.
- Later, have them share the highlights with the class.



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# Activities for ELT classes to develop intercultural understanding (cont.)

## 3. Traditional Food Day

- Organise a class event where each student brings a dish from their culture, or from a different culture around the world.
- Before enjoying the meal, have students share the significance of the dish and any customs related to its preparation or consumption.

## 4. Cultural Comparisons

- Provide a list of cultural aspects such as greetings, family structure, or celebrations.
- Have students compare these aspects in pairs or small groups, discussing similarities and differences.

## 5. Cultural Storytelling

- Ask students to share a story from their culture or a personal experience related to cultural differences – or research and share stories from different cultures
- This can be done through written essays, oral presentations, or even dramatic storytelling.

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# Activities for ELT classes to develop intercultural understanding (cont.)

## 6. Media Analysis

- Assign students to analyse and discuss a movie, TV show, or news article from different cultural perspectives.
- Encourage them to explore how the media portrays different cultures and to identify stereotypes.

## 7. Role-Playing Cultural Situations

- Create scenarios that involve cultural misunderstandings or differences.
- Have students role-play these situations and then discuss how they could have been handled more effectively, promoting cultural sensitivity.

## 8. Cultural Quizzes or Games

- Develop quizzes or games that test students' knowledge of various cultures eg. taboos in different cultures.
- This can include questions about customs, traditions, famous landmarks, and historical events.

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# Activities for ELT classes to develop intercultural understanding (cont.)

## 9. Guest Speaker Sessions

- Invite guest speakers from different cultural backgrounds to share their experiences.
- This could be done in person or virtually, providing students with direct exposure to diverse perspectives.

## 10. Cross-Cultural Dialogues

- Pair students from different cultural backgrounds (this could be online or via WhatsApp) and provide them with discussion prompts.
- Encourage open and respectful dialogue about their cultural experiences, beliefs, and values.

# What are the Do's of intercultural communication? - Do's of IC

Avoid assumptions, jokes

Use symbols, diagrams and pictures

Avoid using slang and idioms

Investigate their culture's perception

Take cultural and local differences into account

Say what you do and do what you say; use understandable language

# What are the Do's of intercultural communication? – Dont's of IC

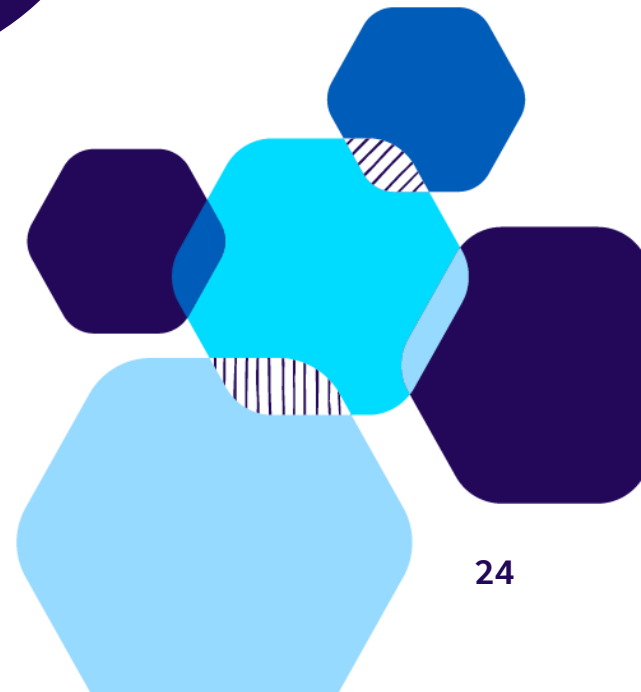
Using the  
same  
approach  
world-wide

Considering  
traditional  
knowledge &  
practices as  
'backward'

Letting cultural  
differences  
become a  
source of  
conflict

Failing to  
ignore  
culturally  
dependent  
enabling &  
counteracting  
forces

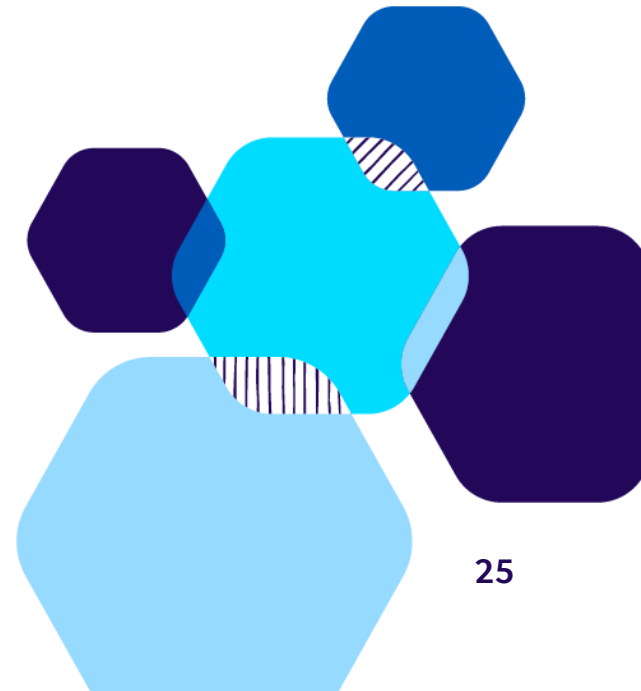
Failing to take  
language  
barriers into  
account





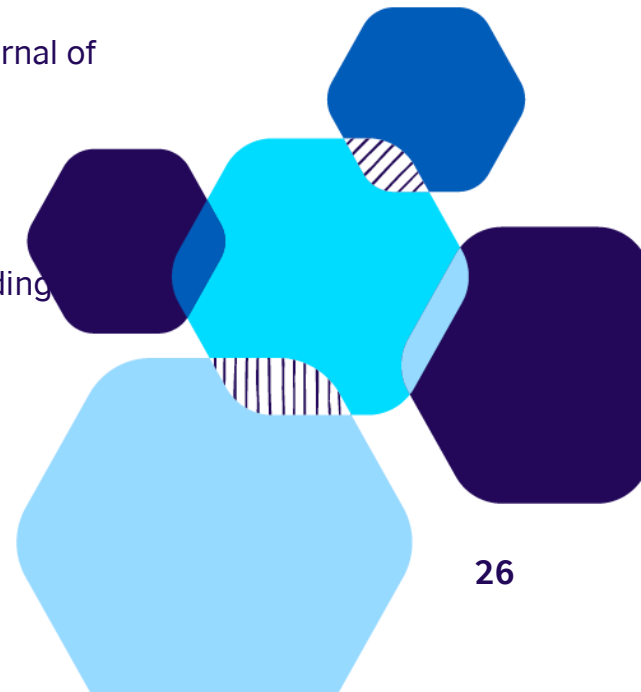
# Final questions to think about

1. In what ways do you believe intercultural communication skills can positively impact students' learning experiences in African classrooms?
2. Can you share examples of effective IC strategies you've employed in the past and the outcomes they generated?
3. How can IC contribute to building a sense of community and unity within the school, especially in the context of diverse cultural backgrounds?



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# Thank You!!

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