

5.2 Tools for Intercultural Competence

Have a look at our compilation of tools for intercultural competence development.

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- [Clock on the Ceiling](#)
- [Synchronised Clapping](#)



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Animal Exercise

Field of application	Intercultural training
Resume / Brief description	The goal of the exercise is to make it clear to the participants that conflicts can be approached and solved in many different ways. In addition, the participants learn more about their own conflict style and learn to develop different perspectives in conflict resolution.
Target group	Students Lecturers Entrepreneurs Colleagues of the same company or work team Colleagues working in intercultural contexts Professionals of different area
Group size	This exercise can involve 10-30 participants. The ideal size is 15-20 participants.
Objectives	The Animal Exercise has the objective <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand that there are different ways of conflict resolution• To gain experience about one's own conflict style
Requirements	Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 different pictures of animals (mouse, snake, elephant, dolphin, owl, lion)• Flipchart paper• Thick felt pens• 30 moderation cards• Large room with open space Time <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60 minutes• Another 30-40 minutes for deeper learning



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<p>Implementation - Guidelines</p>	<p>1. Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute animal pictures on the walls in the room with sufficient distance. • Write definition of conflict resolution on flipchart • Explain conflict styles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Verbal direct ◦ Verbal indirect ◦ Emotionally closed ◦ Emotionally open <p>2. Process</p> <p>2.1. Conflict situation (20 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of "conflict" • Brainstorming: Collection of ideas for the respective animal images (conflict resolution strategy) • Further procedure: Ask the participants to stand up and explain the further procedure as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "I will present a series of situations. Please listen carefully to the description." ◦ "Go to the animal symbol that best describes your own reaction in this situation. Remember: There is no right or wrong answer - it is important that you think about your own conflict resolution style in these situations." • Description of the situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Can be individually adapted to the target group: conflicts in private life - with friends - with strangers <p>2.2. Evaluation (40 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the participants to name different strategies for dealing with conflicts. Write the mentioned strategies on the moderation cards • Participants are asked to find definitions for direct or indirect language in conflicts, emotionally open or reserved behaviour • Explain that each participant has his or her own conflict style that can be categorised in a model, such as the Model of intercultural conflict styles according to Mitchell R. Hammer (Intercultural Conflict Style Model, www.icsinventory.com) • For example, assign the moderation cards with the behavioural patterns in conflicts to the appropriate fields. <p>3. Debriefing</p> <p>To debrief, you can reflect on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between which styles are conflicts most likely to escalate? • What strategies could be used to successfully resolve conflict between people with different styles? <p>4. Deeper learning (30-40 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divide the participants into 4 group and work on the following question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "What are the strengths of each conflict style?" • Present results
<p>Additional format/references</p>	<p>Thiagarajan, S. (2006). Thiagi's 100 Favorite Games. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.</p> <p>Thiagarajan, S. (2016). Interaktive Trainingsmethoden: Thiagis Aktivitäten für berufliches, interkulturelles und politisches Lernen in Gruppen (3. Auflage.). Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag.</p> <p>ICS Inventory (n.d.). Resolving Conflict across Cultural Boundaries: Using the Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory (ICS). Available at: https://icsinventory.com/</p>



Company Picnic

Field of application	Intercultural training
Resume / Brief description	Company Picnic is a role-playing game for a whole group, which involves everyone and has great expressiveness. This activity presents a variant of an improvisation game.
Target group	Students Lecturers Entrepreneurs Colleagues of the same company or work team Colleagues working in intercultural contexts Professionals of different area
Group size	This activity should involve a minimum of 12 participants. The ideal size is 25-50 participants.
Objectives	Company Picnic is a role play activity for a whole group. It focuses on justifying status-based behaviour and its consequences.
Requirements	<p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A set of 52 poker cards. If you have a larger number of participants, you can also use two or more sets. • Stopwatch. • Signal (whistle, sound signal, etc.) <p>Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 to 20 minutes
Implementation - Guidelines	<p>1. Preparation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute the cards. 2. Remove the joker cards and shuffle the cards. The participants come forward and receive one card each. Everyone holds them to their forehead, face forward, so that everyone but the person can see the card. No one may look at the card before the end of the game. If someone has seen the card due to carelessness, the person returns the card and receives a replacement. 3. Create the scenario and role assignment. 4. Provide the following background information and instructions in your own words: <p>All participants work for a multinational accessories manufacturer and came together for a company picnic to celebrate a very successful first half of the year. In the following minutes you will interact with as many people as possible. Treat each person as if their status in the company is the same as the one on their forehead (two is the lowest card, ace is the highest) (two = post office, ace = CEO, king = member of the board). Their task is to give their counterpart subtle clues as to which card they have. At the same time, you have to assess the clues you receive from others about your card. Do not say anything to anyone directly about the map. And do not say anything you would not normally say.</p> <p>2. Process</p> <p>Start of the role play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give 4 minutes • Start the stopwatch <p>End of the role play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 4 minutes you will stop the game. The participants are still not looking at their cards but should now form a line from the lowest status to the highest status. Nobody should be rebuked. When everyone is in line, the participants look at their cards to see how well they have guessed their status. <p>3. Debriefing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the participants about their feelings. • Ask the participants if the role play reflected real events. • Ask about status symbols in reality. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What if? ◦ What if we only had one ace, but several deuces, threes? ◦ What if during the role play you met your boss who had a two?



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Additional format/references

Thiagarajan, S. (2006). Thiagi's 100 Favorite Games. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Thiagarajan, S. (2016). Interaktive Trainingsmethoden: Thiagis Aktivitäten für berufliches, interkulturelles und politisches Lernen in Gruppen (3. Auflage.). Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag.

Thiagarajan, S., & van den Bergh, S. (2020). More Interactive Training Strategies for Improving Performance. Skript for the Course "Interactive Training Strategies", 4-6 June 2020, Winterthur, Switzerland.



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Stereotypes

Field of application	Intercultural training
Resume / Brief description	Recognising stereotypes and differentiating between the two attitudes (judgement/recognition), recognising and questioning your own and others' perceptions and judgements.
Target group	Students Entrepreneurs Colleagues of the same company or work team Colleagues working in intercultural contexts Professionals of different area
Group Size	There are no limitations regarding group size. The ideal size is 15-25 participants from different countries.
Objectives	<p>The activity has the objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Recognise stereotypes and differentiate between the two attitudes judgement and recognition. • To recognise and reflect on your own and others' perceptions and judgements.
Requirements	<p>Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart paper (one per nationality) • Red and yellow post-it notes • Signal (whistle, sound signal, etc.) • Stopwatch <p>Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45-60 minutes (10-15 minutes for filling out and sticking on the slips of paper)
Implementation - Guidelines	<p>1. Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute red and yellow post-it notes to all participants. • Encourage them to reflect on their own and foreign cultures (criteria). • Consider which common stereotypes can be assigned to which culture (criterion). • Tell each participant that he or she should note down at least three cultures and characteristics including their own. • Clarify the difference between stereotyping and neutral perception. • Describe and allocate the notes. Participants have 10 minutes to note down the stereotypes. • After the time is up, a signal is given and the participants should present the notes on the corresponding flipchart papers. • Participants go to the flipchart papers of their country of origin, reflect on it and prepare a short presentation (approx. 2 minutes). • Presentation of the results. <p>2. Debriefing</p> <p>To debrief, you can reflect on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was learned? • How can I act differently in the future?



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Clock on the Ceiling

Field of application	Jolt Perspective
Resume / Brief description	This activity provides participants an opportunity to experience and recognise perspective shifts.
Target group	Students Lecturers Entrepreneurs Colleagues of the same company or work team Colleagues working in intercultural contexts Professionals of different area
Group size	Optional
Objectives	Experience and recognize a change of perspective
Requirements	Material <ul style="list-style-type: none">• n/a Time <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5-10 minutes
Implementation - Guidelines	1. Process <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The participants rise.• Ask them to point to the ceiling with their arm and index finger stretched out.• The participants draw a circle with their finger, turning clockwise.• Check if the direction is correct.• After a few turns with the arm stretched out, ask the participants to continue the turn while rotating the arm down to chest level.• Ask the question: "In which direction does your finger turn: clockwise or anti-clockwise?"• Many participants will react irritated because they notice that they turn counterclockwise.• Give the instruction to start over and concentrate better.• When the first participants leave because they realise they have done nothing wrong, they stop and start the debriefing. 2. Debriefing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring the discussion to the following conclusion: The finger always turns in the same direction, only our perspective changes.• Where in life does perspective play a decisive role?
Additional format/references	Thiagarajan, S. (2013). Interactive Techniques for Instructor-Led Training. Thiagarajan, S. (2016). Interaktive Trainingsmethoden: Thiagis Aktivitäten für berufliches, interkulturelles und politisches Lernen in Gruppen (3. Auflage.). Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag.



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Synchronised Clapping

Field of application	Jolt Experience of action
Resume / Brief description	Synchronised Clapping is a very easy, short exercise that requires no equipment and the size of the group does not matter.
Target group	Students Lecturers Entrepreneurs Colleagues of the same company or work team Colleagues working in intercultural contexts Professionals of different area
Group size	Optional
Objectives	The activity has the objective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To experience that action has more effect than words.
Requirements	Material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> n/a Time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 minutes for the activity 10minutes for the debriefing
Implementation - Guidelines	1. Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the participants to clap their hands and wait until everyone has done so. Complain about the miserable result. You want all participants to clap at the same time, so that the listener can hear a single thunderclap. Indicate that you use a non-electronic power support system to ensure synchronisation. You will count to three and then clap their hands. At the word "clap" all should clap at the same time. Now count "one, two, three". After the number three, you will clap without saying the word "clap". After most participants have also clapped, they act surprised and now say "clap". Ask the participants why they did not follow the instructions and did not wait for the word "clap". Someone will probably say, "But they clapped themselves." In response, ask them if they would throw themselves off the cliff just because they did. 2. Debriefing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did the participants learn during the activity?
Additional format/references	Thiagarajan, S. (2016). Interaktive Trainingsmethoden: Thiagis Aktivitäten für berufliches, interkulturelles und politisches Lernen in Gruppen (3. Auflage.). Schwalbach: Wochenschau Verlag.



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