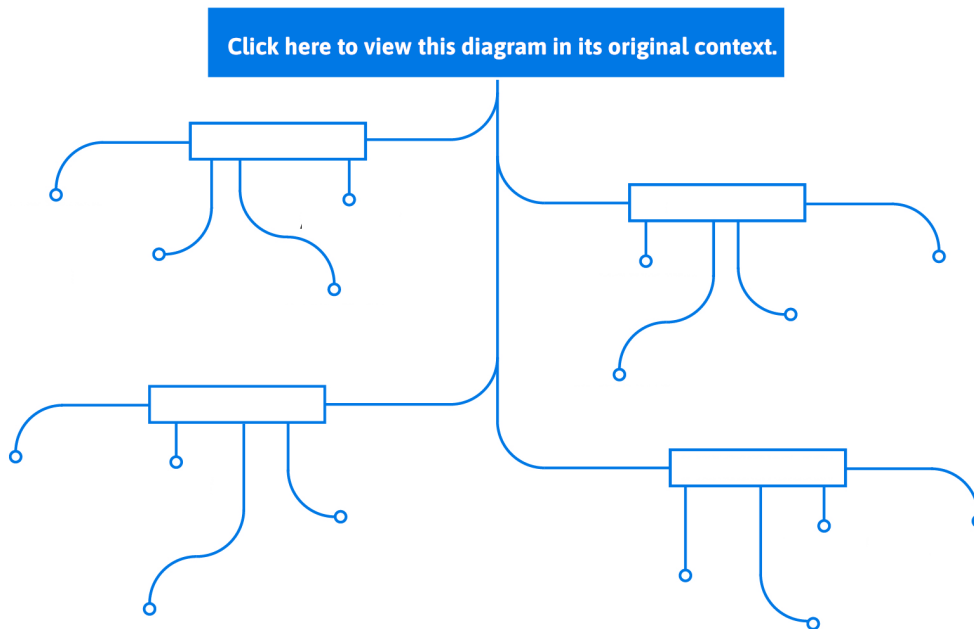


Intercultural Competence 101

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Intercultural competence is “the ability to function effectively across cultures, to think and act appropriately, and to communicate and work with people from different cultural backgrounds – at home or abroad”. Not only does this competence encourage one to acknowledge the diversity that exists between and within cultures (distinguishing personal, cultural and universal behaviours, traditions and beliefs), it further encourages one to relativize and decentre their own perspectives, beliefs, behaviours and values. It encourages our students and teachers to eliminate the “us and them” narrative and promotes empathy, respect, critical analysis and curiosity for better understanding the diversity of the world we live in.



Source: McKinnon, 'What is intercultural competence?', Glasgow Caledonian University, accessed 10/06/18 and the UNESCO 'Intercultural Competences. Conceptual and Operational Framework', 2013. Retrieved from [Monash University, Intercultural lab. What is intercultural competence?](https://www.monash.edu/international/intercultural-lab/what-is-intercultural-competence/)

Milton Bennett (2004) describes becoming interculturally competent as:

“movement from Savoir to Savoir Faire”

★ **Savoir (acceptance):**

awareness and information concerning another’s culture

★ **Savoir apprendre (adaptation):**

observing and learning about other cultures

★ **Savoir être (integration):**

being able to move beyond a personal perspective to view others non-judgmentally

★ **Savoir faire (Intercultural worldview):**

being able to interact proficiently



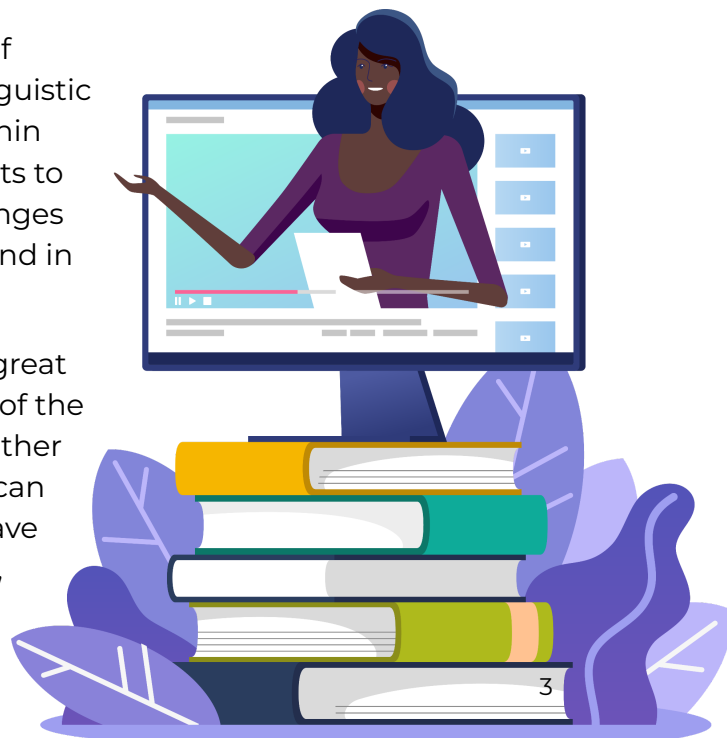


This process of becoming interculturally competent can be incorporated into any classroom, focusing on its community context. Below are some examples of ways to encourage Intercultural Competence in your classrooms:

- Explore the diversity that exists within Canada and what it means to be “Canadian”. This will encourage students to question what they understand to be “Canadian” and how vastly identity and culture vary across the 13 provinces and territories of our country. Linguistic variation across Canada (in English and French) is another great way of encouraging respect for all accents and varieties of languages.
- Promoting translanguaging in the FSL classroom is an amazing way to promote respect for all languages and create a space in which everyone’s identities and life experiences are valued as equal.

Examples of how to do this can include:

- ❖ allowing students to translate French words and concepts into their own languages/languages that they are learning
 - ❖ learning and employing key words/concepts in other languages that are relevant to the lives of your students or even by simply allowing students to share about their linguistic repertoires in French as a way of getting to know one another better.
 - ❖ When making comparisons, using three or more languages rather than exclusively comparing French to English can help to avoid an “us and them” narrative.
 - ❖ Not all classrooms will have speakers of multiple languages. However, metalinguistic awareness can still be encouraged within these contexts by encouraging students to reflect on how their language use changes depending on who they’re talking to and in which contexts.
- Utilizing French videos in the classroom is a great way to expose our students to authentic use of the language from all over la Francophonie. It further demonstrates to them how learning French can open up their world to things they’d never have access to otherwise (movies, music, tv shows, memes, literature, etc.)



Resources

- [5 Ways Teachers Can Create a Translanguaging Classroom.](#)
- [Cinefranco.](#)
- [OMLTA: Intercultural Awareness.](#)
- [The Revised Ontario French as a Second Language Curriculum \(2013\).](#)
- [WELCOMM: Intercultural Awareness – Interculturality.](#)
- [Monash University. 2021. What is Intercultural Competence? *Monash Intercultural Lab.*](#)

