



Encountering a new culture ?

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Internationalisation

What is internationalisation on a personal level?

“According to the JYU strategy, all students at the university develop a JYUIdentity, which, among other things, includes strong interaction competence, language skills and cultural awareness as well as global and ethical responsibility.”

(Strategy of the University of Jyväskylä 2019–2030)

“Internationality means that you learn to communicate effectively in various situations in cooperation with people from different cultural backgrounds and starting points. Internationality is a skill as much as any other, and you can learn it and develop in it.”

- Tomislav, IT student



Content

- What to expect?
- How to cope and make the most of it?





What do you expect?



Please, discuss in small groups

Why these expectations?

List the most common sources for expectations within your group.





Metsäkatu, Jyväskylä / February 2022

Watch: Chimamanda
Adichie: The danger of a
single story
(https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)



Encounters

- What is a/ the new culture that you are about to encounter?
- Who do you think that you will encounter?

**"Cultures Don't
Meet, People Do"**

Unni Wikan 2002, 83

**"First, cultures do not
interact — people do.
Culture only matters to
the extent it is manifest
in and through people
in interaction."**

Brian Spitzberg 2015, 24.



Please write 5 sentences that all start I am...

- Our communication is dependent on:
 - Culture(s)
 - Previous experiences
 - Personality traits
 - Communication style
 - Context
 - Situation
 - Etc.





Something to take into consideration:

- KESKI-SUOMI 3.1.2021 5:54
- **Ulkomaalaiset opiskelijat jäävät Jyväskylässä ilman suomalaisia ystäviä, edes yli vuoden kaupungissa asuneet eivät tutustu paikallisiin – suomalaisilta toivotaan aloitteellisuutta**
 - (Keski-suomalainen 3.1.2021)
- "Foreign students are left without Finnish friends at Jyväskylä."





Communication relationships and adaptation / belonging

- ❖ Communication relationships are often seen as a one very important factor in adapting to life changes in general
- ❖ Immigrants' communication relationships not only with local people but also with their own ethnic or national groups seem to reinforce the (long term) adaptation process
- ❖ Geographical places become *homes* through relationships
- ❖ A dramatically increasing number of young people experiencing social anxieties (Jefferies & Ungar, 2020; Ranta et al., 2024).



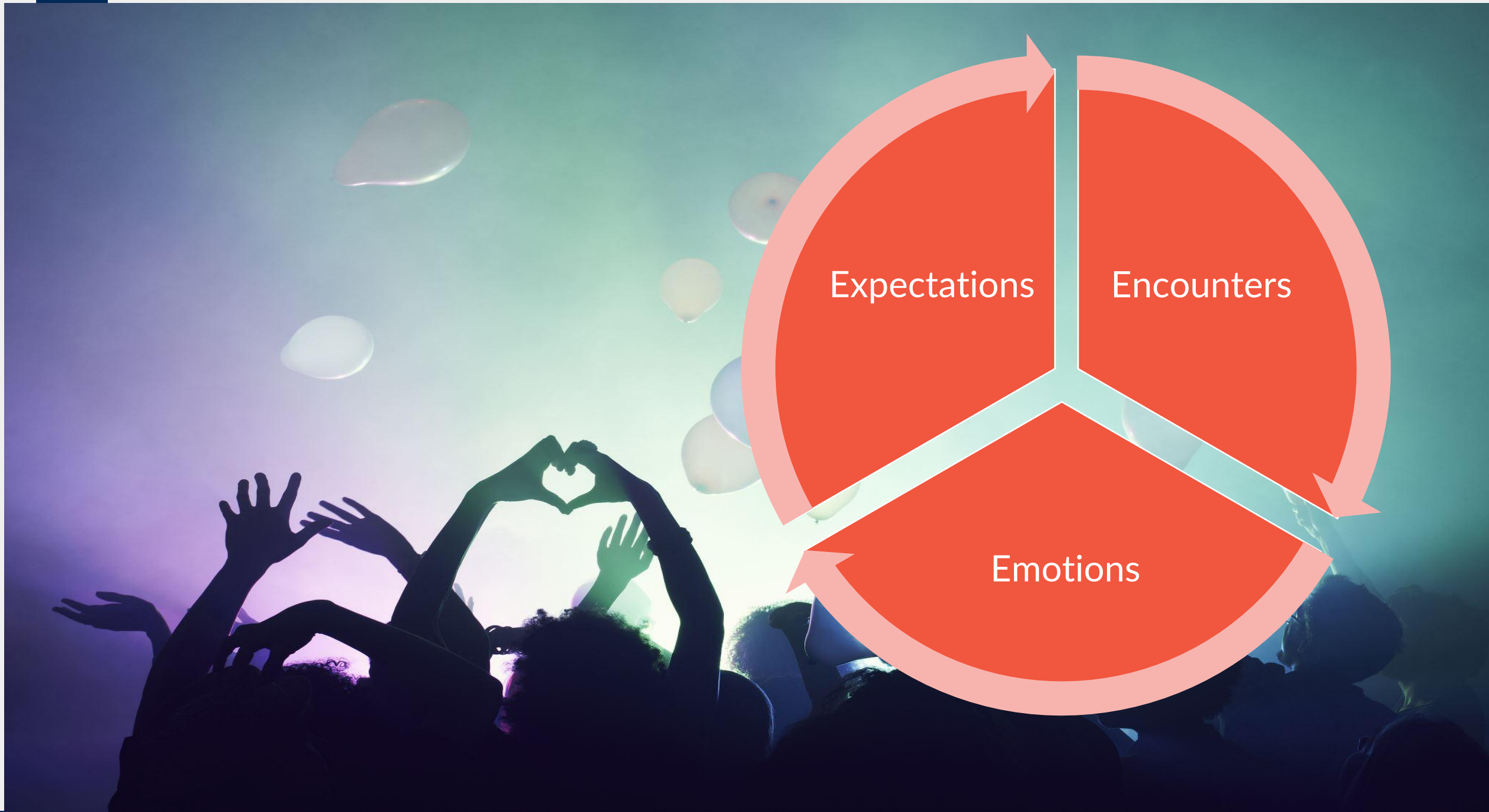


Benefits of extensive and diverse social networks

- **Innovations** (Moolenaar & Sleegers 2010 ; Obstfeld 2005)
- **Creativity** (Burt 2004; Perry-Smith & Shalley 2003)
- **Informal learning** (Gielen et al., 2003)
- “Scholars have emphasized that social networks are crucial for SMEs since in such firms, many decisions, including those concerning international growth, often depend upon **a single person, with her capital of knowledge, experience, and, crucially, relationships.**” (Masiello & Izzo, 2019, s. 658; highlighting/coloring by Kokkonen).



More at: Sedziniauskiene, Sekliuckiene, & Zucchella (2019). Networks' Impact on the Entrepreneurial Internationalization: A Literature Review and Research Agenda.





What happens to individuals and groups moving to new cultural environments?

Psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation

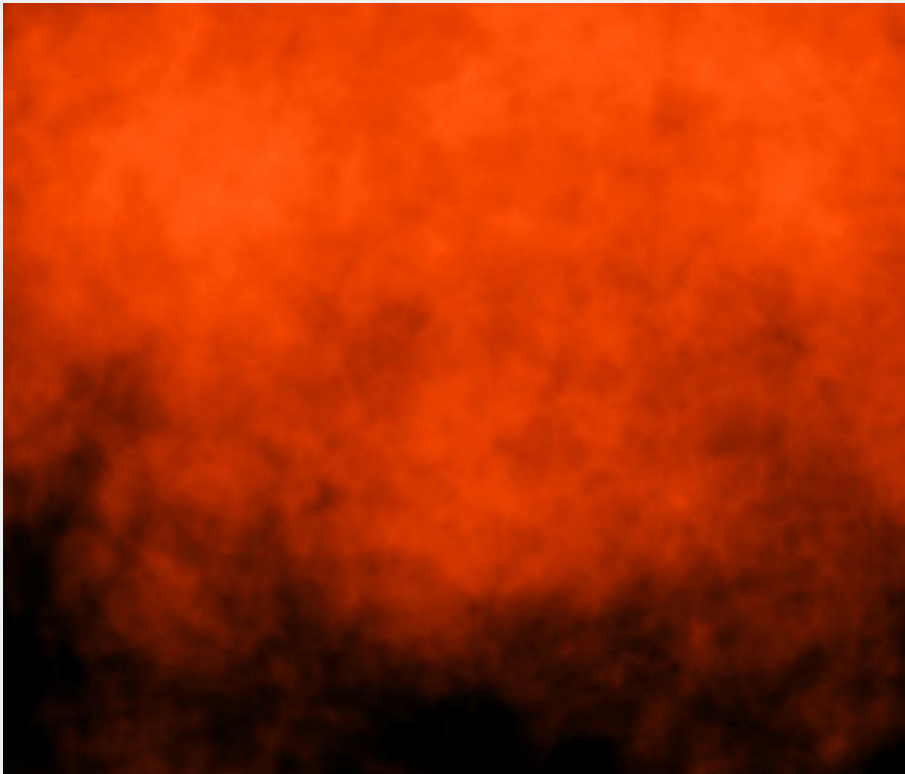
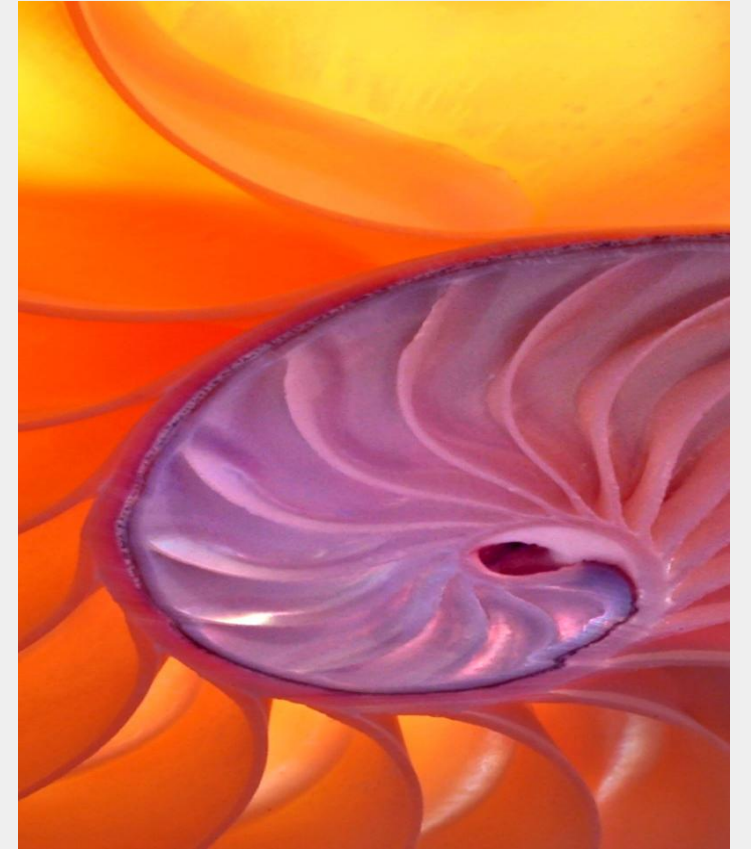
- Things that may change
 - ❖ Environment
 - ❖ How things look, sound, smell, feel, taste, etc.
 - ❖ Language
 - ❖ Values
 - ❖ Norms and rules
 - ❖ Perception and interpretation



Strong feelings and emotions IC contexts

- **Anxiety, ambiguity, uncertainty**

- Reactions:
- tiredness
- burnout
- avoiding contact
- alienation
- ethnocentrism and prejudice
- blame the others of one's own bad feelings and problems
- mild paranoia
- psychosomatic symptoms, such as aches and pain





Exchange experience: what makes your exchange experience unique?

- Length of stay
- Previous experiences
- Expectations
- Attitudes toward change
- Motivation
- Personality
- Own cultural identity
- Communication competence





Please discuss:

- What do you think that will be different?
 - 3 minutes
- What do you think that will be similar?
 - 3 minutes

**Now that you are, or
are about to become,
'international' how to
make the most of it:**

**Enhancing your
multilingual and
intercultural
competence**





The myth of physical mobility: the assumption that studying abroad and/or in multicultural group leads to the acquisition of intercultural competence



- Students will not develop the required competencies merely through contact if the programs are not intentionally designed to address these competencies (see Helm & Guth, 2022; Varela, 2017).
- More diversity on campus does not necessarily lead to meaningful intercultural interactions, and students may experience overwhelming difficulties associated with intercultural group work (e.g., Harrison & Peacock, 2010; Summers & Volet, 2008).
- Asking students to simply interact within diverse contexts, situations and relationships can possibly lead to undesirable outcomes like enhancing stereotypes (e.g., Holmes & O'Neill, 2005).



Multilingual and intercultural communication competence, MICC (©Movi, JYU)

- A framework of competence (not a measuring tool!)
- Based on existing theories and studies (tools)
- What is different / new:
 - Competence as situated and contextual
 - Only a tool for reflection and feedback
 - Based on communication (not for example personality traits)
- Elements divided into 1) attitudes/motivational factors, 2) knowledge, and 3) skills.
- References and further information: Kokkonen, L. & Natri, T. (2024). Framework for multilingual and intercultural communication competence: Bringing forward a pedagogical perspective and assessment for learning. JYU Studies. 19-44. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/96336>





What can you 'learn'?

Examples of elements of MICC

- **MOTIVATION and ATTITUDES: Empathy**
 - I am willing to step into someone else's shoes
 - I am motivated to imagine as well as intellectually and emotionally participate in others' experiences
 - I want to understand others' experiences and worldviews
- **SKILL: Flexibility and adaptability**
 - I can adapt my verbal and nonverbal communication according to the situation, context, and participants
 - I am able to take into consideration multiple perspectives
 - I can process and react to new and novel information
 - I am able to adapt language use to new situations and formulate thoughts in different ways
 - I can shift between languages to have situational flexibility and adaptability to contribute to understanding and the participation of members with diverse multilingual and multicultural profiles





My educated advice 😊

- Become aware and reflect – if you have challenges, do not hesitate to seek help
- Jump out of your comfort zone – emotional ride ahead of you
- Get to know people
- Keep in contact with your social networks
- Courses offered by Movi



Are you interested in developing your understanding of intercultural communication?

Intercultural Communication Competence, XYHX1005

The course runs 22.09.2026 - 19.11.2026

Registration ends 21.9.2026.

Ready to enroll? Register in Sisu!



**I WISH YOU
GOOD TIMES,
LOT'S OF
EDUCATING &
EMOTIONALLY
ENRICHING
EXPERIENCES!**



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