



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO  
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

# Going for an exchange - 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*



# Mitä vaihdossa opitaan?

- It is widely recognized that the mere presence of students with diverse cultural backgrounds in the same institution is insufficient to harness the rich potential of student diversity as an educational resource ([Harrison & Peacock, 2010a](#) , 2010b; [Leask, 2009](#) ; [Montgomery, 2010](#) ; [Summers & Volet, 2008](#) ; [Thom, 2010](#) ; [Volet & Ang, 1998](#) ).
- More diversity on campus does not necessarily lead to meaningful intercultural interactions ([Glass et al., 2013](#), [Redden, 2013](#))
- and students may experience overwhelming difficulties associated with intercultural groupwork ([Harrison & Peacock, 2010b](#) ).
- Students may even return home more ethnocentric and less willing to interact with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds ([Vande Berg, 2007](#), [Vande Berg et al., 2009](#) ).
- Inabilities to reflect on the experience and what Jackson (2015) calls a ‘pressure to slip back’ into familiar routines, returnees may quickly ‘shoe-box’ their international learning.
- **This means that valuable opportunities for enhancing one’s intercultural competence and deepening of any new understandings are then lost** (Jackson, 2015; 2012, [Meyer-Lee, 2005](#), [Szkudlarek, 2010](#) ).



Expectations

Encounters

Emotions



# What do you expect?



Please, discuss in your  
small groups

## Why these expectations?

List the most common sources  
for expectations within your  
group.





# 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.



# What to expect?

- **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story** (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9lhs241zeg>)
- Walther 2022: The Theory of Interpersonal Knowledge

Level of knowledge	Type of knowledge
Cultural level knowledge	Cultural level assumptions are made quickly when meeting new people (general body shape, clothes, stereotypes). This is done more or less automatically.
Sociological level knowledge	Acquired by additional observations of someone. Describes our impressions of someone's social categories (e.g., assumptions that you hold about age, status, profession, and stereotypes you have with these various social categories)
Psychological level knowledge	Acquired by substantial observations (e.g., what the target person does and how s/he does it.) Knowledge on the target's unique personality; more particular than cultural and sociological level knowledge.
Interpersonal level knowledge	Knowledge that one generates and develops when having interaction with the other person. Therefore, this knowledge is dyadic, gained experientially, and related to unique communication patterns between certain people. Interpersonal level knowledge is not possible to gain without interaction with the target.

To really know, or predict, how another person would respond to oneself, one should have the interpersonal knowledge gained in real interaction with the other. According to Walther (2022) there is still a difference between “knowing someone else versus knowing that someone else knows us” (p. 392).





## Please discuss:

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





# 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' identities
- Multilingual and Intercultural Communication Competence





# Wellbeing of the international students: Some results from a local study (Kokkonen 2016)

- ❖ **Goodies - student wellbeing advisers** (for more info see <https://opiskelu.jyu.fi/en/study/wellbeing#section-3>)
- ❖ **DATA:**
  - ❖ In depth qualitative interviews (8 Goodie advisers)
  - ❖ 24 Goodie reports (1.1.2016-30.9.2016)
- ❖ **The main reasons for a Goodie meeting:**
  - ❖ Study related issues
  - ❖ Social relationships
  - ❖ Stress and wellbeing
  - ❖ Financial issues
  - ❖ Home sickness, culture shock







# 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





# 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)
- Examples from a business world:
  - Sosiaaliset verkostot auttavat kansainvälistymään nopeammin ja kannattavammin (Zhou et al. 2007, s. 673)
  - Sekä vahvoilla että heikoilla suhteilla on suoria positiivisia vaikutuksia uuden liiketoiminnan kansainvälistymisessä (Andreea et al. 2008).
- “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).



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





# Now that you are about to become 'international' how to make the most of it: Enhancing your multilingual and intercultural competence

- Courses offered by Movi  
(<https://movi.jyu.fi/en/courses/multilingualism>)
- Becoming 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

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

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