Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
Best Practices for Intercultural Communication During a Global Virtual Exchange

What is a Global Virtual Exchange?

- o Global virtual exchange programs are designed for students to gain cross-cultural experience through collaboration with partners from around the world without leaving their host site. (Todhunter et al., 2013).
- o Quality, engaging, and effective virtual exchange has the potential to build students' interest in education and success in the workplace (Curtis & Ledgerwood, 2018; Ruth et al., 2019).
- o Virtual exchange allows students to gain similar benefits as studying abroad without exerting a significant amount of financial resources and time (O'Dowd 2018; Curtis & Ledgerwood, 2017).
- o Interacting with people from different cultures around the world is now becoming the norm among higher education institutions, but that doesn't mean intercultural communication is easy (Interculutral Communications, n.d).
- o Therefore, we must develop new communication skills that transcend cultural differences (Intercultural Communications, n.d).

Intercultural Communication

- o Since "communication" is the mutual creation of meaning and "culture" is the coordination of meaning and action in a group, "intercultural communication" is the mutual creation of meaning across cultures (Bennet, 2013).
- o While there is no guarantee that people will be respectful of the differences they encounter in this process, it is certainly a criterion of good communication that people seek to understand the intentions of each other (Bennet, 2013).
- o The potential of intercultural communication is to offer alternative perspectives and approaches to tasks, thus contributing to innovation and creativity (Bennet, 2013).

Tips for Effective Intercultural Communication

Students should be prepared to communicate and share their ideas in group interactions that lead to rigorous inquiry, spirited discussion, and constructive critique from each other and faculty.

In the event that a translator is needed, remember to speak slowly and pause appropriately to allow time for translation while maintaining eye contact with the person you're speaking to.

These tips below have been adapted from Hollister, 2020; 10 tips, n.d.; Online education success with netiquette, 2017
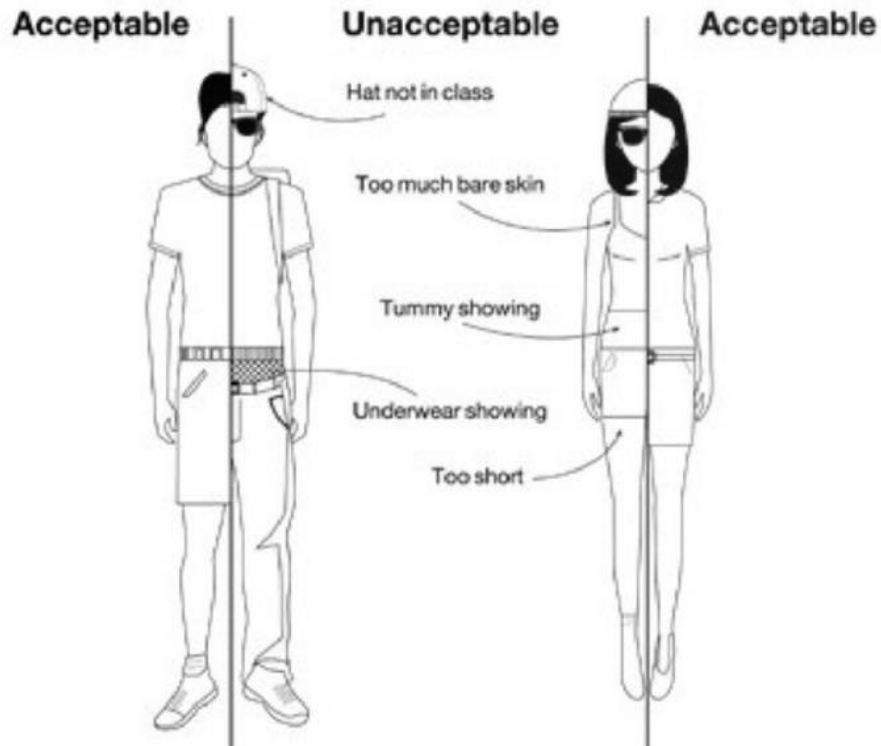
- o Use proper language
  - o Avoid sarcasm and emoticons
- o Make sure identification is clear

- o Ex: "Hello Karen", "Thank you Justin"
- o Ask questions when you are unsure something
- o Speak slowly and clearly
- o Use correct spelling and grammar
- o Avoid colloquialisms, slang, and jokes
  - o Not everyone will understand what you are saying and some terms may be offensive in other cultural contexts
- o Take time to learn the history and culture about the country you are collaborating with to build a better understanding. In addition, be mindful of the historical context that the United States has with that country.
- o Be mindful of any biases that your collaborating country has towards the United States and that you may have towards that country
- o Respect diversity of thought, opinion, and lived experience

Things to Consider as a TTUHSC Student

- o At TTUHSC we are committed to fostering an online community of students and faculty that provides a welcoming and safe environment regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or religious belief.

- o We recognize there are multiple ways of speaking and interacting depending on cultural backgrounds, lived experience, educational backgrounds, and technology. Please be respectful and considerate.

- o Cultural differences are important to be mindful of and competence of those differences will be fostered throughout the virtual exchange. Cultural competence is the ability to understand, appreciate, and interact with people from cultures and belief systems different from one's own (DeAngelis, 2015).

- o Classroom and online learning should be treated the same and all students must adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct (Student Code) found in the student handbook, as well as, TTUHSC OP 56.01 Acceptable Use of IT Resources.

- o With access permitting, have your camera on to foster better interpersonal communication with those you are collaborating with.

- o Remember to dress respectfully (See tips and image below) and be in an appropriate setting when engaging in virtual exchange. Treat any exchange the same as you would in an in-person setting.

  - o Do not wear clothing that reveals too much skin
    - ▪ Ex: tanktops, croptops
  - o Do not wear anything that covers your face
    - ▪ Ex: sunglasses
  - o Do not wear anything with offensive language or symbolism

The Dresscode Disagreement, 2018

Additional Resources for Students to Explore

10 Netiquette guidelines Online Students Need to Know: https://www.rasmussen.edu/student-experience/college-life/netiquette-guidelines-every-online-student-needs-to-know/

Netiquette: Etiquette Guidelines for Distance Learning: https://www.tamiu.edu/distance/students/netiquette.shtml

Netiquette: Good Online Behavior at UCL: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/education-planning-2020-21/online-teaching-guidance-tips-and-platforms/netiquette-good-online

What Is Intercultural Communication: Learning New Styles: https://www.uopeople.edu/blog/what-is-intercultural-communication/

Intercultural Communication Skills to Help You Work with Anyone: https://www.typetalk.com/blog/intercultural-communication-skills-help-work-anyone/

Bibliography

(2018). The Dresscode Disagreement: Teachers and Students Share their Opinions. Retrieved November 8, 2021, from https://theflame.unishanoi.org/hs-senate-news/2018/11/21/the-dresscode-disagreement-teachers-and-students-share-their-opinions/.

10 tips for improving your intercultural communication skills. Perficient Latin America. (n.d.). Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://nearshore.perficient.com/nearshoring-outsourcing/10-tips-for-improving-your-intercultural-communication-skills/.

Bennett, M. J. (2013). In *Basic concepts of Intercultural Communication: Paradigms, principles, & practice: Selected readings*. Intercultural Press, A Nicholas Brealey Pub. Company.

Curtis, T., & Ledgerwood, J. R. (2018). Students' motivations, perceived benefits and constraints towards study abroad and other International Education Opportunities. *Journal of International Education in Business*, *11*(1), 63–78. https://doi.org/10.1108/jieb-01-2017-0002

DeAngelis, T. (2015). In search of cultural competence. *PsycEXTRA Dataset*. https://doi.org/10.1037/e520422015-022

Hollister, D. (2020, March 17). *Helping students develop proper internet etiquette*. The world's learning company. Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://www.pearson.com/ped-blogs/blogs/2020/03/helping-students-develop-proper-internet-etiquette.html.

Intercultural Communications: How does culture complicate communication? Perficient Latin America. (n.d.). Retrieved November 4, 2021, from https://nearshore.perficient.com/nearshoring-outsourcing/intercultural-communications/.

O'Dowd, R. (2018). From telecollaboration to Virtual Exchange: State-of-the-art and the role of Unicollaboration in moving forward. *Journal of Virtual Exchange*, *1*, 1–23. https://doi.org/10.14705/rpnet.2018.jve.1

Online education success with netiquette. UTEP. (n.d.). Retrieved November 3, 2021, from https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/utepconnect/blog/october-2017/10-rules-of-netiquette-for-students.html.

Todhunter, F., Hallawell, B., & Pittaway, D. (2013). Implementing a virtual exchange project for student nurses in Queensland and nottingham. *Nurse Education in Practice*, *13*(5), 371–376. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2012.10.007