



# Supporting Intercultural Classroom Engagement

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Camosun College

Multilingual Support Services

Winter 2024

# Positionality and Territorial Acknowledgement



My name is Sarah McCagherty. I am Jewish, and my Hebrew name is שרה רנה. My pronouns are *she/her*, and I am a cis-gendered, queer woman. I am able-bodied, and I live with the neurodiversity of ADHD. I am a white settler of British descent - Scottish, English, and Welsh.

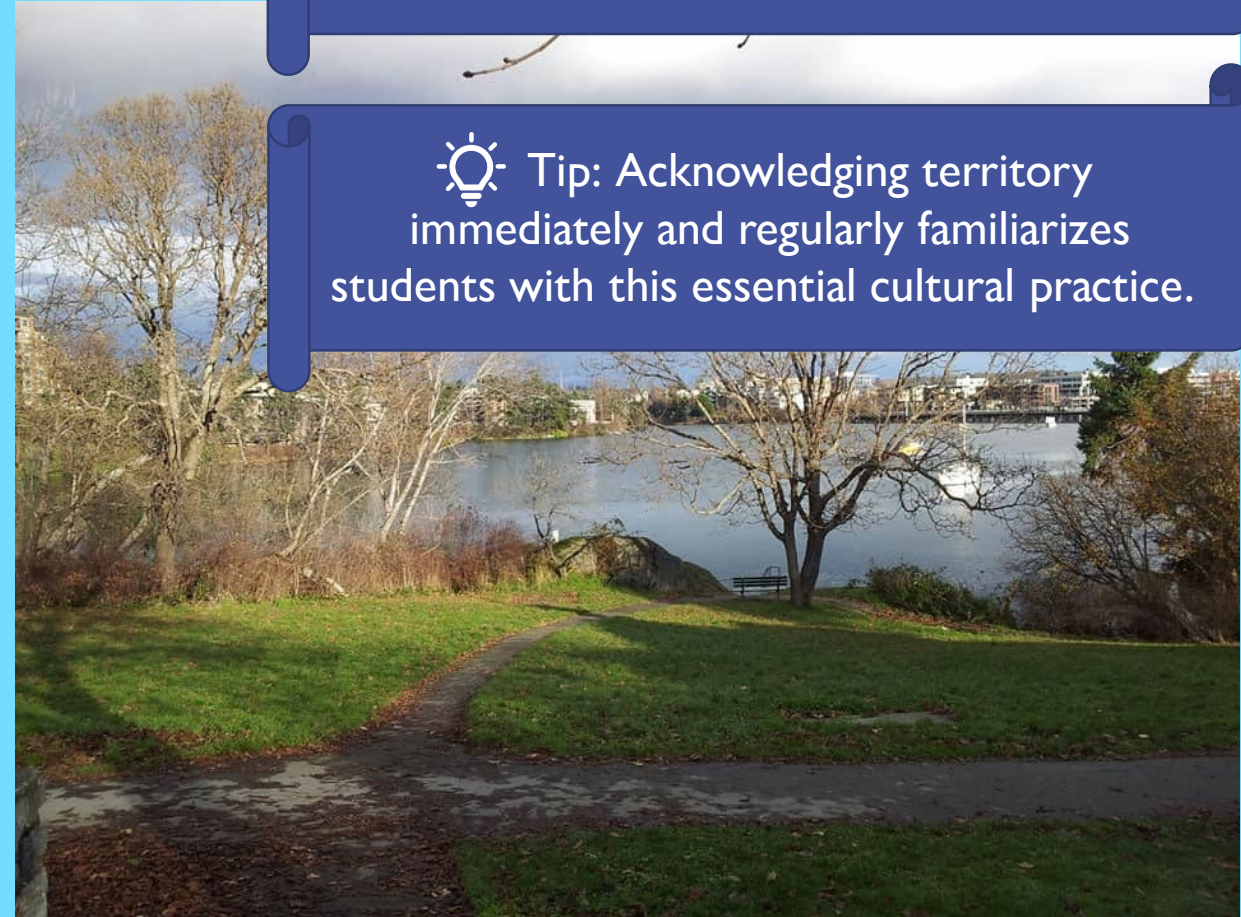
I am thankful to have been born and raised on the territories of the ɫəkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples of the Coast Salish Nations, and I am so grateful for their stewardship, since time immemorial, of these beautiful lands on which I live, work, and raise my family. I would like to acknowledge that I am joining you today from the lands of the ɫəkʷəŋən Peoples.



Tip: Sharing about yourself makes a connection, begins building relationships.



Tip: Acknowledging territory immediately and regularly familiarizes students with this essential cultural practice.



A path to the dock on the Gorge Waterway near my house, just a short paddle away from the reverse falls and the legendary Camossung.



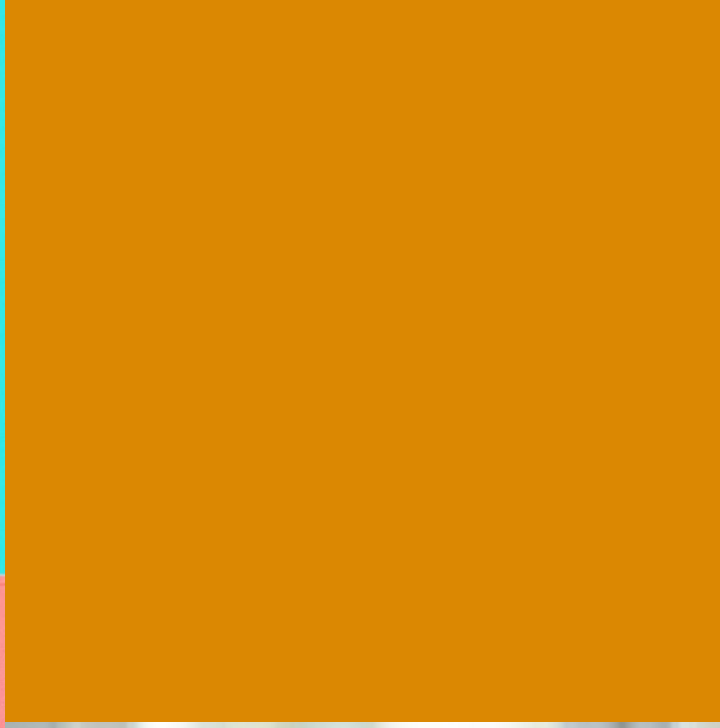
# 1-2-3 Introductions (one-word/phrase answers!)

1. Your name

2. Your  
department

3. How you feel about  
teaching in increasingly  
intercultural classrooms  
(ONE WORD)





## Goals

- Increased understanding of the ways culture influences behaviour in the classroom
- Ideas for building a more inclusive classroom environment to get your English as an additional language (EAL) students speaking comfortably
- Practical strategies for better engaging your EAL students, and all students, in the classroom

# In your experience...

Join the menti.

## Menti questions:

1. What are some techniques you use to engage students in your classroom?
2. What are some challenges EAL students might have with these engagement techniques?

## Our Expectations

As instructors, we may expect our students to come into the classroom with the following abilities →

Is this fair? Would you do as well in a new culture? What about our Canadian recent high school grads or our mature learners?

### Linguistic proficiency:

- Be able to **communicate relatively effectively** with us and their peers
- Some fluency, comprehensible pronunciation, understanding of instructions and cues

### Acceptable communication behaviours:

- Display **appropriate classroom etiquette** and social behaviours
- Know when to interrupt, maintain appropriate eye contact and physical distance
- **Respond almost immediately** after being asked a question
- Use a gesture, a nod, eye contact, or another form of **active listening**
- Possess necessary **discussion skills** - turn-taking, offering ideas, giving and receiving feedback

### Shared educational and cultural values:

- Value **working in pairs and groups**
- **Be independent** and take responsibility for their learning; **ask questions** and clarify information
- **Express opinions** and demonstrate **critical thinking**
- See us as **facilitators** of learning rather than the source of all knowledge
- Be aware of the local history; **understand pop culture references, idioms, and slang**

# Understanding Our Teaching Context

We have culturally and linguistically diverse learners in our classrooms. ~12% at Camosun are international students, BUT consider...

- True numbers of EAL students? **Domestic immigrants/refugees**
- Canadian educated (high school), **no accent**, but learned English at a young age and are **multilingual**
- Students are **NOT all linguistically equal**, including native English speakers and EAL students
- Minimum **language standards for entrance vary** for EAL students

How do we address this diversity and create interculturally engaging classrooms?

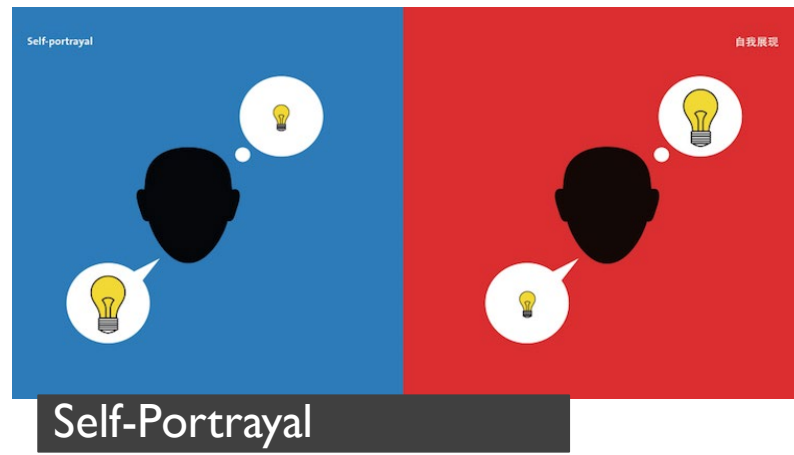
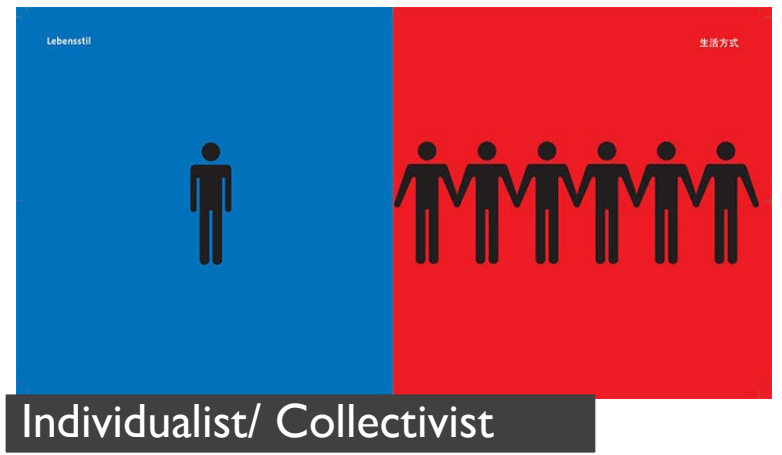
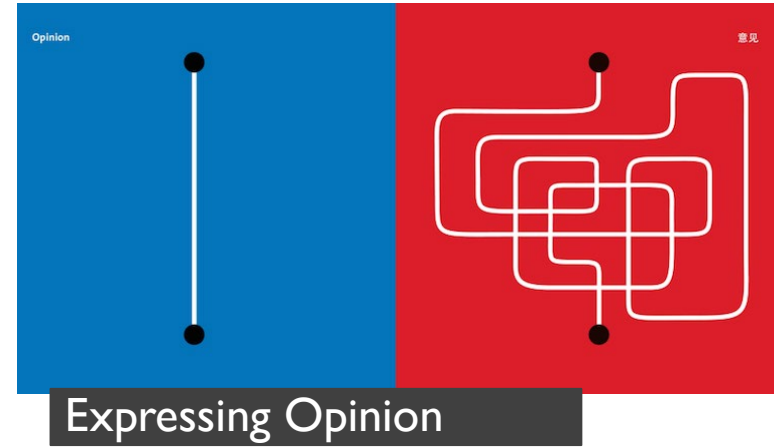
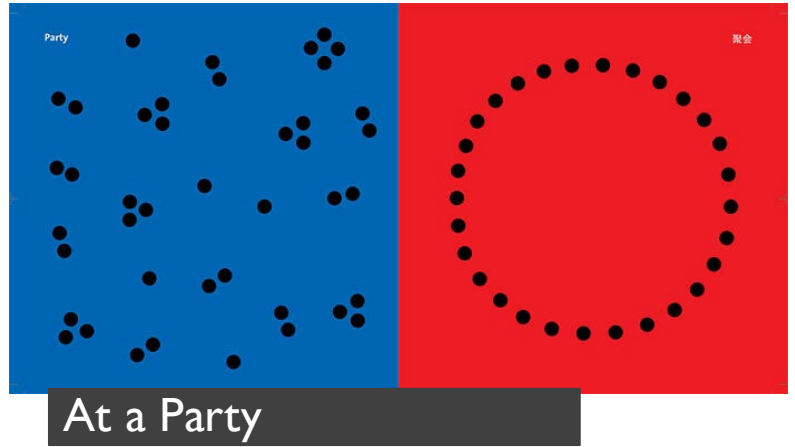
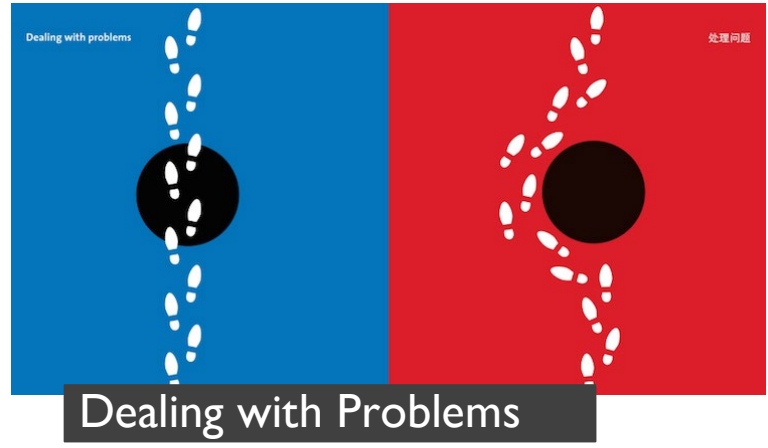
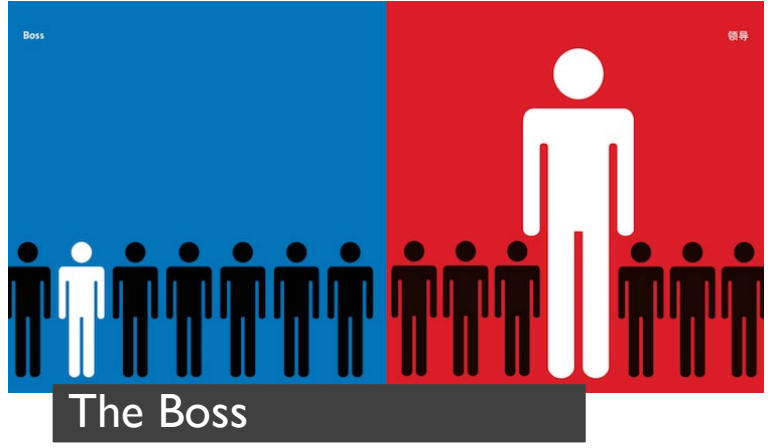




# Comparing Cultures

Consider the cultural differences expressed in these images (blue = Western, red = Eastern)

East Meets West  
• Art Exhibit by Yang Liu, 2016





# Culture in the Classroom

Ideas to keep in mind when you are teaching in a multicultural classroom:

Culture is a “mode of being” guiding our **perspectives, actions, and communication** (Kitayama, Duffy, & Uchida, 2007, p. 137).

Culture is made up of systems of values and preferences...

- that even people **from within the culture** don't always agree on
- that are **constantly shifting and changing**
- and that **interact** and sometimes **conflict** with one another (Findley & Rothney, 2011, p. 14).

People are mostly unaware of their cultural behaviours:

- “*Those people* are diverse. *Those people* have culture. I am just **normal.**”



Classrooms are places where culture shows itself clearly:

- teaching methods; **communication** between teacher and students
- types of **classwork** – discussions, presentations, group work

# Cultural Challenges



## Communication behaviours:

- Direct vs. indirect
- Offering opinions
- Disagreeing
- Interrupting
- Turn-taking



## Social behaviours:

- Eye contact
- Physical distance
- Response time
- Silence



## Culture and Values:

- Collaborative learning – in pairs, groups
- Individualist/Collectivist
- Instructor's role
- Knowledge of local history, pop culture, idioms

# Strategies



**KNOWING:** Get to know students; needs analysis



**CONNECTING:** Build community, intercultural awareness



**VARYING:** Use a variety of class interactions – group size, response time, etc.



**CLARIFYING:** Make expectations clear for participation, group work, etc.

**BREAKOUT:** In pairs/groups, come up with specific ways to implement these strategies.

- Consider what, when, who, ...



❖ Refer to Intercultural Classroom Engagement Strategies handout.



# Thank you!

- ❖ Look for your **Intercultural Classroom Engagement Strategies** reference document, based on your collaborations today and other recommendations from the Multilingual Support Services team – coming to your inbox soon!
- ❖ Would you like a consultation on teaching multilingual students and supporting your intercultural classroom? Contact your MSS!

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