



# Welcome!

Please introduce yourself in the chat

Share your name and indicate on a scale 1 to 5 how many interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds you had during your academic or professional experience, where 1 is very few and 5 is a great many.



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
MELBOURNE

# Facilitating intercultural learning through Story Circles



# Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which of our campuses are situated. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who have made a contribution to the life of the University community.

Learn more at Murrup Barak [\*\*https://murrupbarak.unimelb.edu.au/\*\*](https://murrupbarak.unimelb.edu.au/)

## ***What is an Acknowledgement of Country or Welcome to Country?***

*You will see these frequently while studying at the University of Melbourne. The development of respectful relationships between the University of Melbourne and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities is an important step towards reconciliation. Respect can be manifested either by any of us making an Acknowledgement of Country, or experiencing a ceremonial Welcome to Country performed by Elders and Traditional Owners of the land we are on. You will have a chance to experience an Aboriginal ceremonial Welcome, once we are able to resume in-person events on campus.*



# Session overview

- What might be the value of developing one's intercultural competences?
- What are Story Circles?
- Why should Story Circles be used in education?
- How can Story Circles be facilitated?



# The value of intercultural competences

- Intercultural competences are attitudes, knowledge and skills that help people communicate and collaborate across difference.
- Intercultural competences improve human interactions across difference, whether within a society or across borders.



# UNESCO: Developing intercultural competences through Story Circles





# Briefing: What are Story Circles?

- An approach to developing intercultural competences through sharing and reflecting on personal experiences in a group setting.
- In Story Circles, participants share life experiences, becoming active producers of knowledge.



# Briefing: What is NOT part of Story Circles?

- **Group therapy:** While students may share personal stories, the focus is on developing intercultural competences.
- **Workshop:** This methodology is more of an experiential session. A supported space is created for students to practice their intercultural competences.
- **Mandatory attendance:** Participation needs to be on a voluntary basis. It is not recommended to make Story Circles mandatory for facilitators or participants.





# Briefing: Why should Story Circles be used in education?

- Help participants recognise similarities and differences with others.
- Facilitate connection on cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural levels.
- Empower participants to own and enrich their experience.
- Can be facilitated by staff and students who are skilled in working with people from diverse backgrounds and able to implement the Story Circles model.



# Briefing: Story Circles goals

- Demonstrate respect for others.
- Practise listening for understanding.
- Cultivate curiosity about similarities and differences with others.
- Gain increased cultural self-awareness.
- Develop empathy.
- Engage in critical reflection on one's own intercultural competencies development, as well as on the intercultural experience.
- Develop relationships with culturally different others.



# Story Circles overview

1. Briefing (*20 minutes*).
2. "Get acquainted" round (*10 minutes; 1-2 minutes per story*).
3. "Intercultural competences" round (*20 minutes: 3-4 minutes per story*).
- 3a. "Intercultural competences" round flashback (*15 seconds for each person's story*).
4. Debriefing/Reflection time (*30 minutes*).



# Story Circles #1: "Get acquainted" round

What is a favourite food that you would eat growing up and how does that relate to your background?





## Story Circles #2: "Intercultural competences" round

What is one of the most positive interactions you have had with a person(s) who is different from you, and what made it such a positive experience?





# Debriefing

- Is essential to Story Circles.
- Enables participants to reflect on the small-group experience.
- Enables facilitators to observe what has been achieved by each small group.
- Establishes that intercultural learning and development is a lifelong process.





# Important questions for debrief

- What common themes did you hear from the stories?
- What did you learn about yourself through this experience?
- What do you want to explore further after hearing these stories?
- How has this experience helped you practice listening for understanding and developing empathy?
- Stepping back from the experience itself, what are one to two insights you've gained that will help you relate better to those who are different from you?
- What will you do as a result of this experience?

# References

Berardo, K., Deardorff, D. K., & Trompenaars, M.F. (2012). *Building cultural competence: Innovative activities and models*. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/monash/detail.action?docID=986900>

Deardorff, D. K. (2020). *Manual for developing intercultural competencies: Story circles*. UNESCO Publishing.

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The calendar displays the months of January, February, March, April, May, and June. Each month is color-coded: January (blue), February (green), March (purple), April (orange), May (red), and June (yellow). The days of the week are listed at the top of each month. The calendar includes various labels for weeks, semesters, and specific events or themes.

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## Sum up

1. Intercultural competences are attitudes, knowledge and skills enabling the creation of an inclusive community.
2. Story circles develop intercultural competences by empowering participants to develop a cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural connection.
3. Committing to the story circle goals enables the creation of a comfortable environment in which intercultural competences can be developed.
4. Story circles' structure: Briefing, "Get acquainted" round, "Intercultural competences" round, Flashbacks and Debriefing.

