From Honeymoon to Expert: Exploring Intercultural Awareness (ICA)

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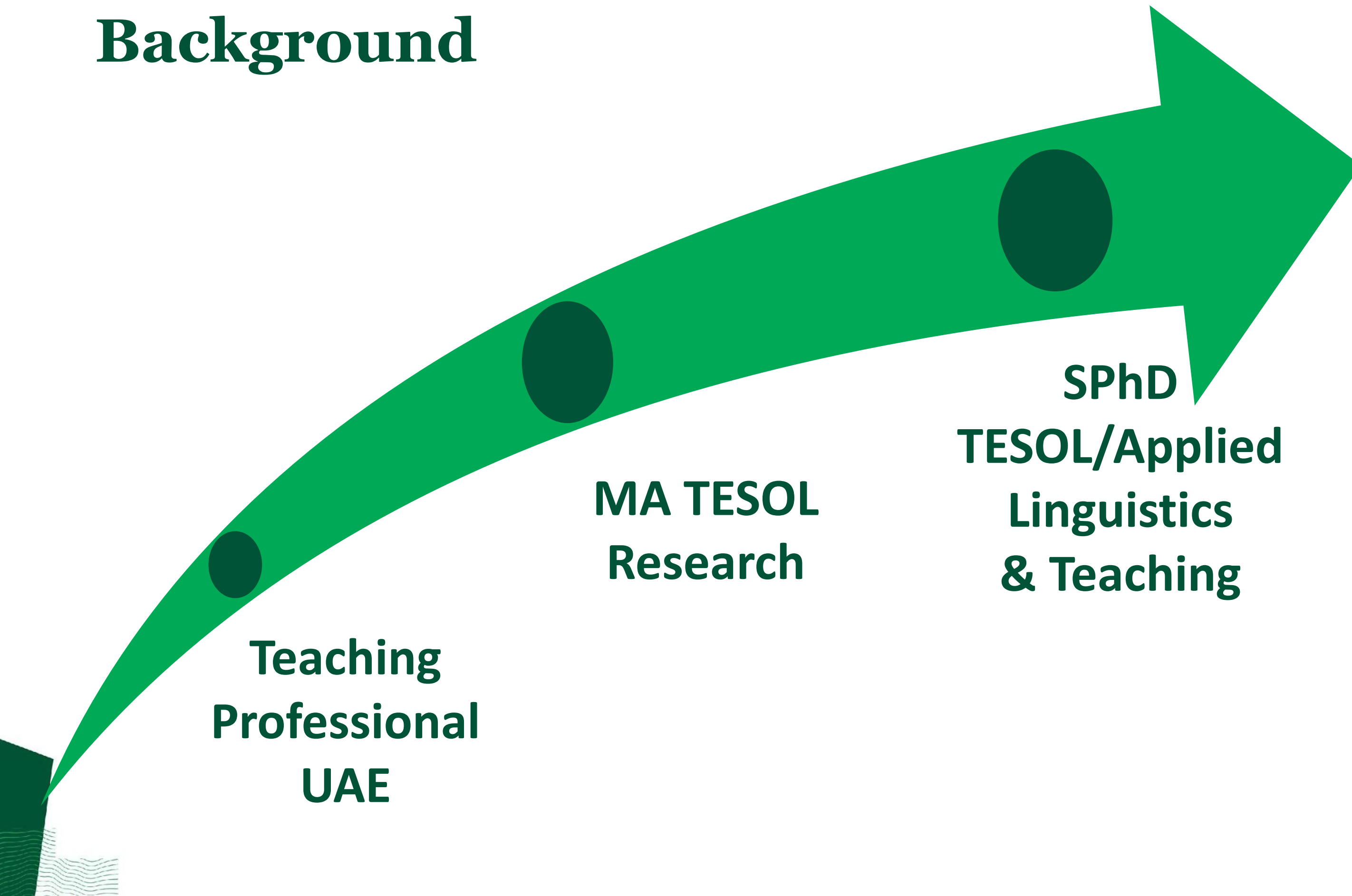Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

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Overview

- Part 1 - Background/Context
- Part 2 - Culture & Related Theories
- Part 3 - PhD Research Focus
- Part 4 - Reflection
- Part 5 - Further Resources

Part 1 – Background/Context

Background

ELT Ireland

Teaching Professional UAE → MA TESOL Research → SPhD TESOL/Applied Linguistics & Teaching

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**Culture:
A central theme**

'Surface/visible culture'

ELT Ireland

Cultural Iceberg Model
(Hall 1976)

'Deep/invisible culture'

Task 1 - Cultural Iceberg Model – **MENTI.COM**

| STYLE	GESTURES & BODY LANGUAGE	LANGUAGE	WORLDVIEW
RULES OF SOCIAL ETIQUETTE	**VALUES & BELIEFS**	**FAMILY & FRIENDSHIP**	**ARTS (inc. MUSIC/DANCE)**
	CONCEPT OF BEAUTY	**CONCEPT OF TIME**	

'Surface/visible culture' ⟶ **'Deep/invisible culture'**

ELT
Ireland

AK Task 1 - Cultural Iceberg Model

| STYLE | GREETINGS | LANGUAGE | WORLDVIEW |

| RULES OF SOCIAL ETIQUETTE | VALUES & BELIEFS | HOW FRIENDSHIP IS UNDERSTOOD | ARTS (inc. MUSIC/DANCE) |

| RITUALS | CONCEPT OF TIME |

'Surface/visible culture' ⟶ 'Deep/invisible culture'

ELT Ireland
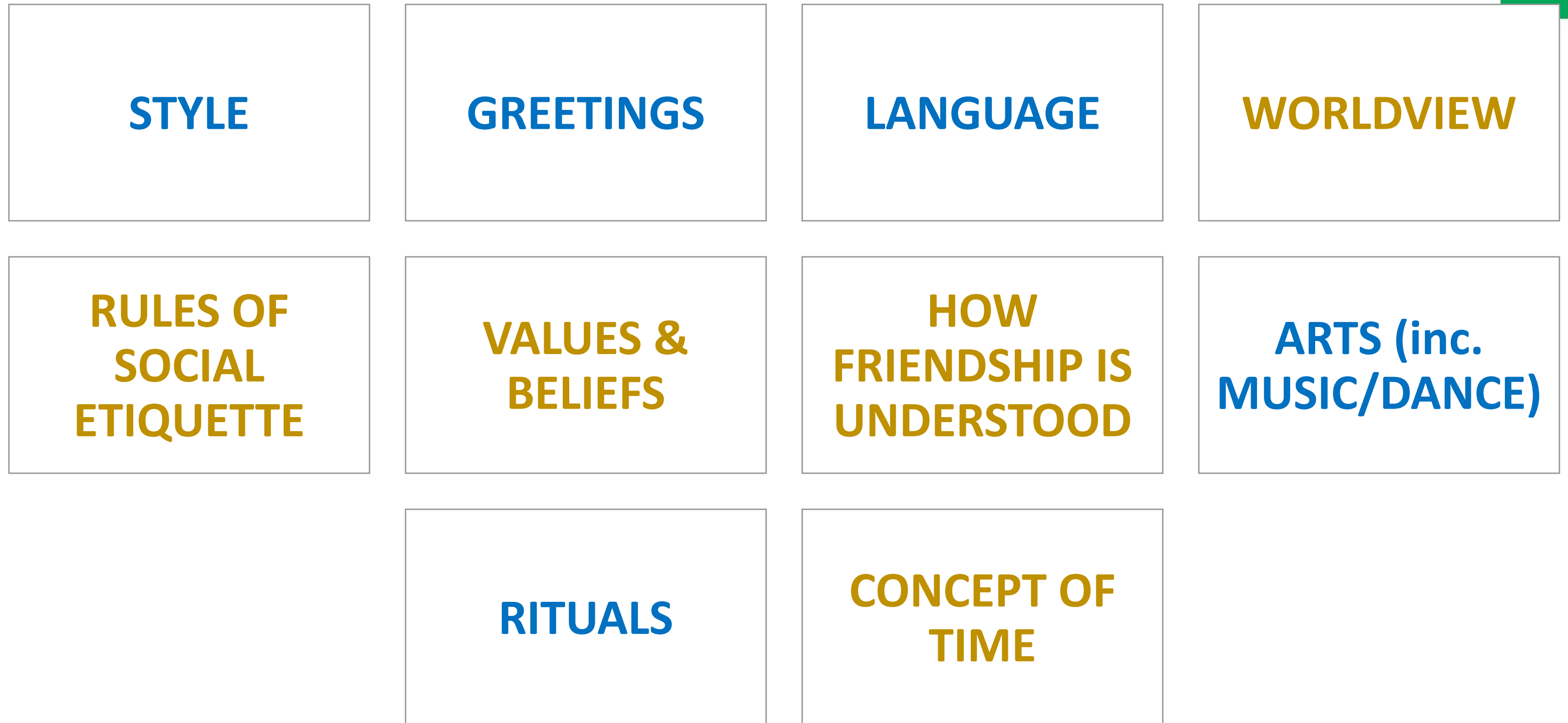
Avoiding Cultural Mistakes

ELT
Ireland

Multicultural Adult EFL Class, University of Limerick

Teacher: *So what did you do in Dublin?*

Student: *We visited the Trinity College and the Book of Kells.*

Teacher: *OK but you went for the craic too….you know the pubs…*

Student: *No alcohol…he is Muslim*

(as cited by Farrell, in Farr 2015, p.100)

Reflection

1. How does culture influence our thoughts and actions?

2. Can you think of examples showing the relationship between visible and invisible aspects?

3. What could happen if the visible features of one culture were interpreted through the lens of the invisible features of another?

Part 2 - Culture & Related Theories

Culture:

Multiple Perspectives

...the ways of people (Lado 1957)

...the knowledge and practices of people belonging to particular social groups (Byram and Morgan 1994)

...shared assumptions, values and norms (Hoy and Miskel 2001)

... the glue that binds groups of people together

... relative and changeable in space and time

...the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and both tangible and intangible products of a society

...complex and intricate; it cannot be reduced to holidays, foods, or dances, although these are of course elements of cultures (Tran-Hoang-Thu 2010)

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Culture: *From a Business Perspective* Zhang and Lowry (2009)

Cultural dimension	Definition	Examples
Power distance	*Power distance* is the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.	**Low**: U.S. and Canada **High**: Japan and Singapore
Individualism and collectivism	*Individualism* describes cultures in which the ties between individuals are loose. *Collectivism* describes cultures in which people are integrated into strong, cohesive groups that protect individuals in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.	**Individualistic**: U.S., Australia, and Great Britain **Collectivistic**: Singapore, Hong Kong, and Mexico
Masculinity-femininity	*Masculinity* pertains to cultures in which social gender roles are clearly distinct. *Femininity* describes cultures in which social gender roles overlap.	**Masculinity**: Japan, Austria, and Italy **Femininity**: Sweden, Norway, and Netherlands
Uncertainty avoidance (UAI)	*Uncertainty avoidance* is the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations.	**Low**: Singapore, Jamaica, and Denmark **High**: Greece, Portugal, and Japan
Confucian dynamism	*Confucian dynamism* denotes the time orientation of a culture, defined as a continuum with long-term and short-term orientations as its two poles.	**Long-term**: China and Japan **Short-term**: U.S. and Canada

Hofstede Insights (2021) *Country Comparison - Hofstede Insights*. [online] Available at: https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/ [Accessed 12 January 2021].

Key issues we are addressing as language teachers

Language teachers are not expected to be anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, and historians. But inasmuch as the language they teach conveys meanings that are unique to a given social and cultural community, it is part of their profession to deepen their understanding of the relationship between text and context when teaching language as communicative practice.

(Kramsch 1999)

Social Identity

…constitutes 'the perception of oneness with or belongingness to a group' (Ashforth and Mael 1989, p.34) including race, gender, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, political affiliations, religious affiliations and language use.

Social groups denote groups of people with specific commonalities.
    → *Primary and secondary groups* (Cooley 1909) are 'membership groups'.   → Primary social groups are long-lasting, often intimate groups (e.g. family, friends, love relationships)
    → Secondary social groups are usually short-term, more impersonal groups   (e.g. work, school, sports teams)
    → Reference social groups: 'generalised versions of role models' (Andersen *et al.* 2017, p.128) that are followed or compared to as a point of reference (e.g.   peers, supermodels, music groups, sports teams).

Task 2 – Social Identity

Draw as many circles as you can think of where you share meanings and behaviours with a group of people.

My cohort

My family

My reading club
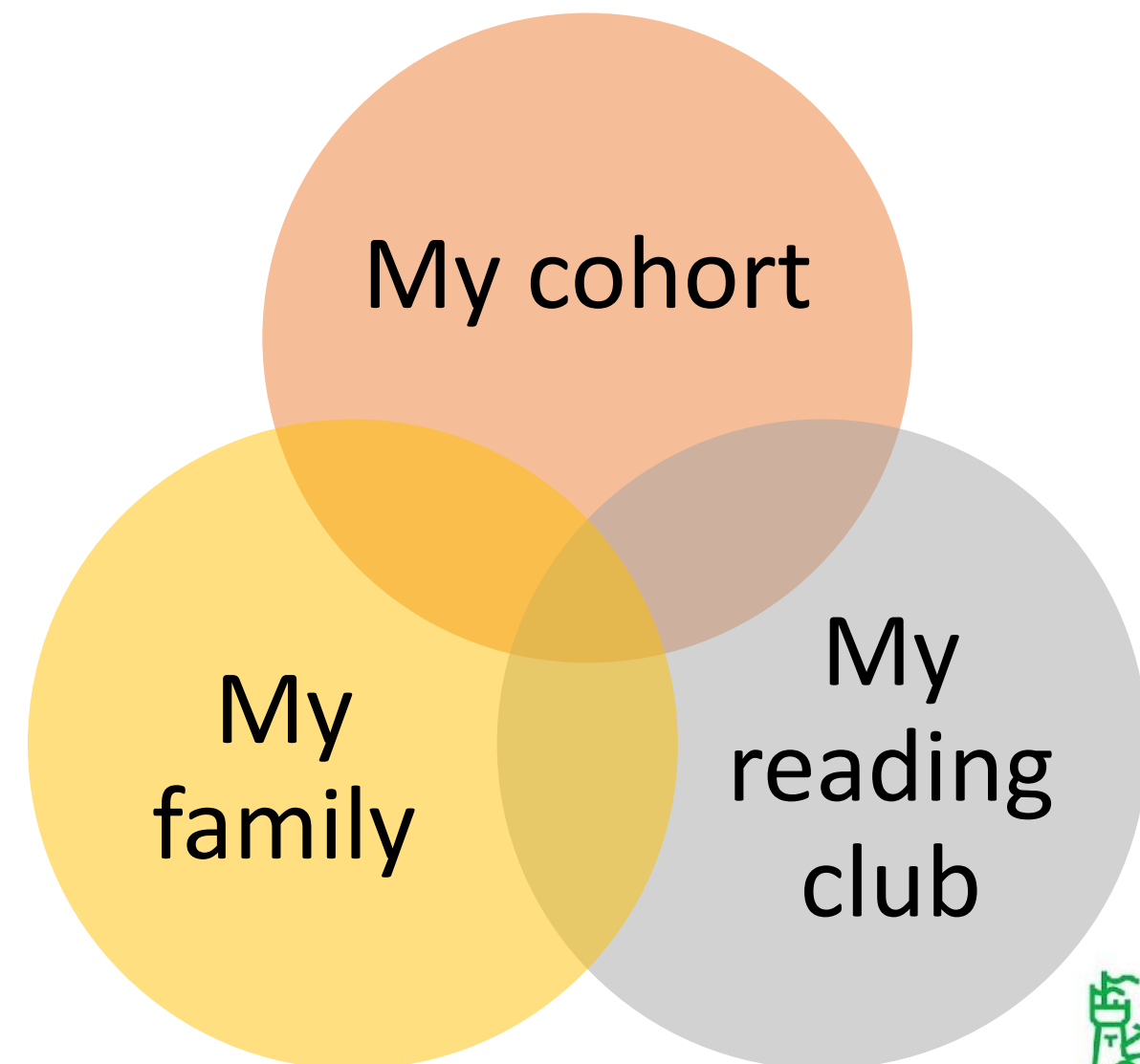
Select **one** of the circles that is quite defined & create a list of some of the *norms, values and behaviours* that define this group.

Describe the one circle you selected to 'unpack'.

Decide whether or not you would have an easy or difficult time **'entering'** each other's cultural group.

Why are some more difficult than others?

Intercultural Awareness (ICA)

…'Perceptions of our own and other people's cultures' (Tomlinson and Masuł 2004, p.6)

…'gradually developing inner sense of the equality of cultures, an increased understanding of your own and other people's cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures both connect and differ. Such awareness can broaden the mind, increase tolerance and facilitate international communication' (ibid., p.7)

…'a conscious understanding of the role culturally based forms, practices, and frames of understanding can have in intercultural communication, and an ability to put these conceptions into practice in a flexible and context specific manner in real time communication' (Baker 2011, p.66)
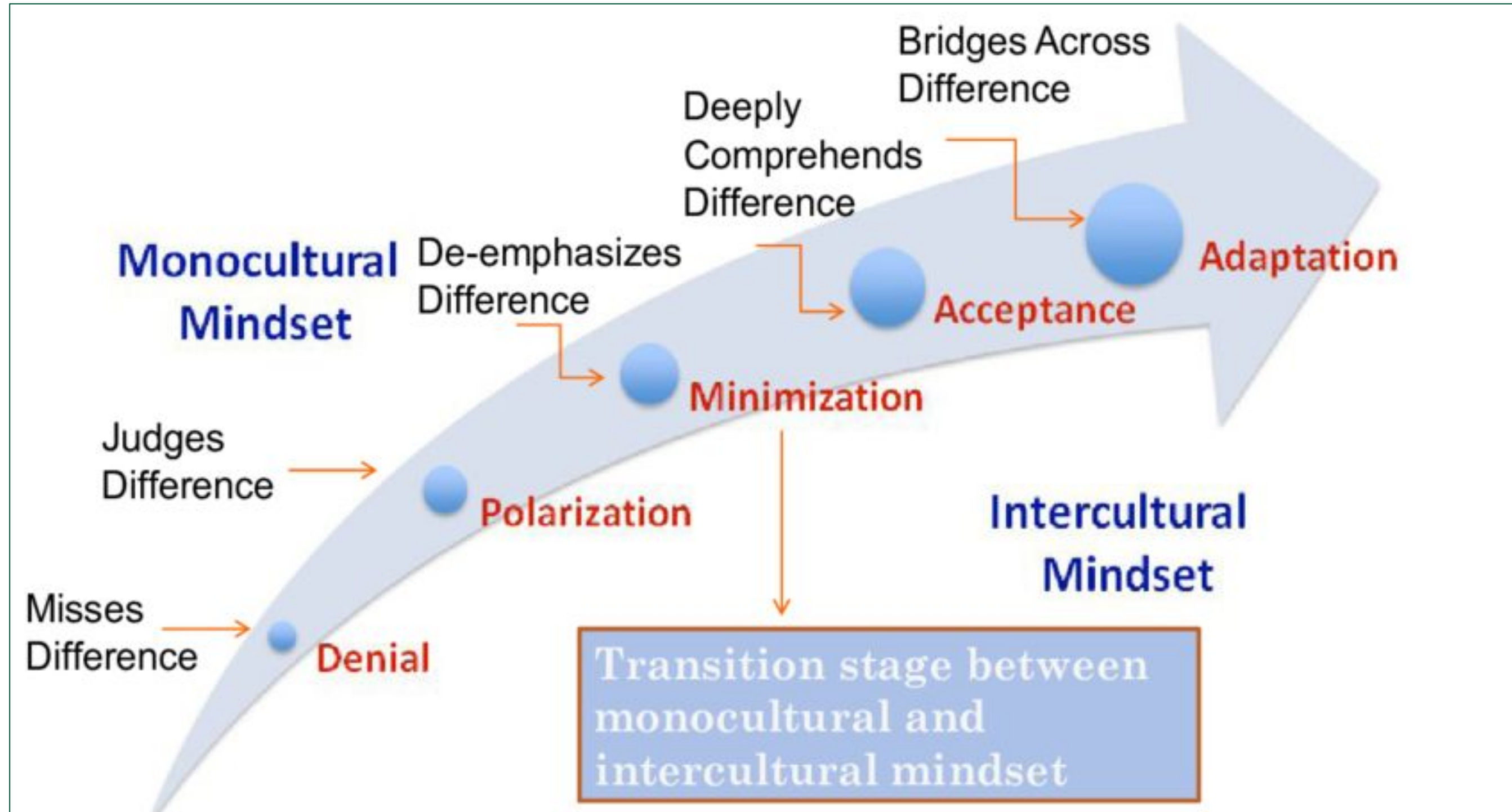
→*Importance of awareness of OWN culture as starting point*

Importance of ICA

As global citizens today, we need to develop the ability 'to move sensitively and intelligently from one cultural context to another' (Byram 2012)

Intercultural Development Continuum

Hammer, M.R. (2011) Additional cross-cultural validity testing of the Intercultural Development Inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35(4), pp.474-487.

ICA – Context of teaching/learning

"Intercultural awareness is a critical disposition for the teaching profession"

(Buchanan et al. 2019:269)

"linguistic and cultural differences, lack of understanding of the curriculum and pedagogy, lack of motivation, religious and lifestyle differences, lack of cultural awareness, and negative stereotypes"

(Akasha 2013:17)

Cultural Relativism

- The objective analysis of other cultures –

   understanding a culture's beliefs and practices from that culture's **point of view.**

- Cultural Relativism is not about imposing judgment or assessing the worth of other cultures.
   This is **ethnocentrism.**

- *For example,*
   Can we judge the wearing of a burqa in Islamic communities, simply because it differs from Western ideas about femininity?

      ☐ Culture is a social construct and relative to its own culture.
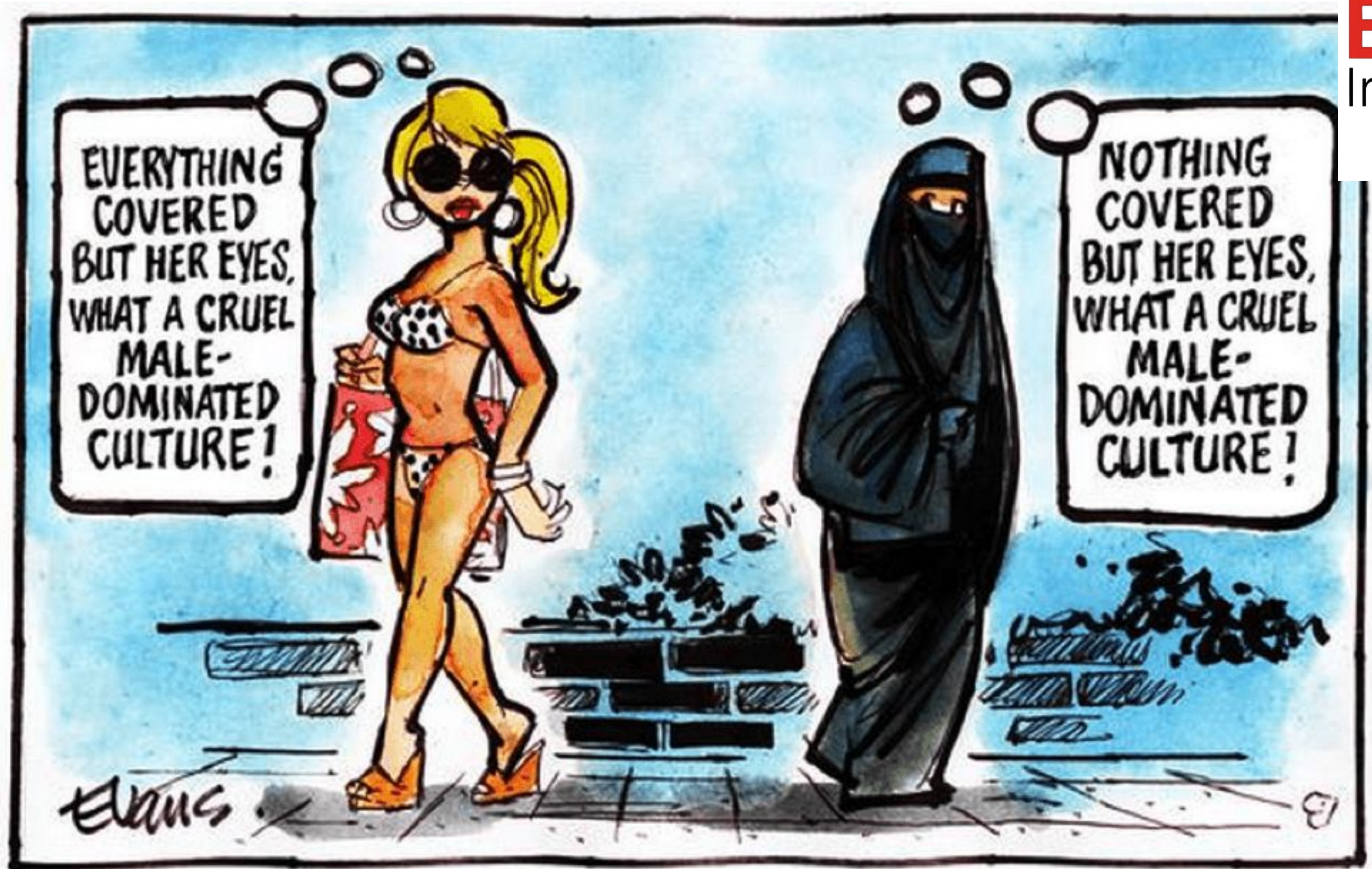
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Evans, M. (2021) *"Cruel Culture" | Jewish Women's Archive*. [online] Jewish Women's Archive. Available at: <https://jwa.org/media/cruel-culture-by-malcolm-evans> [Accessed 8 January 2021].
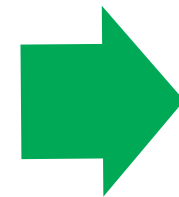
Part 3 - PhD Research Focus

Research Focus

Native EFL Teachers

+

Non-native EFL Managers (UAE)

→

-ICA needs;

-Development of ICA

Part 4 - Reflection

BREAKING STEREOTYPES

1. Mindful of language
2. Engage critically with material
3. Self-awareness
4. Focus on similarities, not differences
5. Engage in dialogue

(Council of Europe 2019, p26)

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Part 5 - Further Resources

It's (past) time to appreciate cultural diversity

Yeates, H. (2019) *It's (past) time to appreciate cultural diversity*. [online] Ted.com. Available at:
https://www.ted.com/talks/hayley_yeates_it_s_past_time_to_appreciate_cultural_diversity#t-170493 [Accessed 12 Mar. 2019].

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Thank you; شكرا

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