



# ITLS INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOL

SYSTEM CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERCULTURAL  
SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL LEARNING

## Let's talk about: reflection and exchange on the basic understanding of culture by the teaching staff

### Abstract:

With the help of the worksheet, the teaching staff can start an exchange about the basic understanding and the inclusion of culture and migration at their school. This requires time and additional input and can be realised, for example, as part of in-service training. In this way, ideally, a mutual understanding of the concept of culture can be achieved.

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**Target group:** teaching staff

**Goals:** to facilitate exchange and a reflection process on culture

**Keywords:** culture, basic understanding, school

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As soon as one takes a closer look at intercultural or migration-related issues, one runs the risk of reinforcing existing stereotypes and clichés. Talking about “culture” might reinforce boundaries which society and the school are only partially conscious of.

In order to avoid such traps, it is advisable to first pave the way for a shared basic understanding of the concepts of “culture” and “migration society”. This could be done, for instance, as part of conferences, instructional days or teacher training days. Case studies could be used as a starting point to encourage the sharing of individual perspectives and analyses of examples. Or one uses methods from intercultural or racism-critical educational work, such as the albatross exercise (*see materials at [www.itts-europe.org](http://www.itts-europe.org)*), to make everyday perception traps tangible. On this basis, an agreement can then be reached on the questions below for reflection.

It is worth taking a break from daily routine and reflect on your own and your colleagues' attitudes.

## Guiding questions for reflection and exchange on a basic understanding of culture

1. What personal experiences and understanding of culture do I have?
2. How do we talk about migration and culture at our school?
3. Is there an appreciative approach to different languages and cultural diversity at school? How can we promote such an approach?
4. What is our understanding of culture? And what kind of understanding do we wish for?
  - ❖ Is culture equated with nation or ethnicity (“The xx just have a different culture.”) and is it used as a relatively closed concept? Is culture understood as folklore and are clichés reinforced? Is culture understood as a collective identity? Is culture used as an explanatory model that sets up demarcations between the majority and the “others”?
  - ❖ Or: Are we talking about the (socio-)cultural imprints on our real-life students Marie, Mustafa, Tomasz? (Socio-)cultural imprints which are fluid and changeable, influenced by geographical, social and family background, by educational background and political attitudes, by gender and age, by individual preferences and decisions, by space and time? Do we take into account the dynamics and changeability of these cultural imprints?
5. How can we ensure that every student, teacher and staff member at our school is perceived as an independent person? That they are not perceived as representatives of a (culturally defined) group, but as individuals with their personal strengths that need to be supported in accordance with their individual needs?