

The Importance/Benefits of Teaching Communication Skills in a Multicultural Environment

AVOIDING CONFLICT

The challenge

Globalisation has advanced and prevailed. This resulted in an increased exchange between countries and a progressively diverse (work-) environment in western countries (Said, 2001). Confronted with a multicultural setting, the communication process between encoder and decoder can experience challenges (Barker & Graut, 1996).

How to fix this

Teaching communication skills to 15 - 18 year olds because the brain is then the most plastic (Pitcher et al. 2012). Meaning it is the easiest time to learn new skills (Pitcher et al. 2012). Teaching communication skills can be done through problem posing, presentations and discussions.

The Aim

How does teaching communication skills in high schools (15-20 years old) allow students to reap the benefits of diversity in a multicultural (work-) environment?

Multicultural communication

The process of communicating is built on the interplay between the encoder and the decoder (Barker & Gaut, 1996; Sperber & Wilson, 1995). Communication and multiculturalism have a strong interrelation. Communication relates to the cultural background of individuals involved (Barker & Graut, 1996).

Benefits of teaching effective communication in a diverse workplace

A diverse work team is a necessity for companies that want to stay competitive when it comes to being creative and innovative because different perspectives come together in a multicultural environment (Martin, 2014). To achieve effective communication, it is of essence for the company to increase the accuracy of perceptions of all employees and managers (Jones & George, 2020).

