


Socio-cultural Skills in Knowledge Transfer Teaching Toolkit

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Additional Print Out Materials (Not in this document)

-  Confidential Briefs – The First Impression
- Socio Cultural Skills Module - Slides

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Socio-cultural Skills in Knowledge Transfer Syllabus

Duration: Approx. 3 hours

This course is tailored for knowledge transfer professionals that conduct their professional activities in diverse and collaborative settings. Throughout the course, participants will explore various cultural models at both individual and organizational levels, gaining the ability to identify and understand these differences. The course will introduce different collaboration models, examining the various ways work can be conducted effectively. Participants will gain understanding of how socio-cultural differences impact effective collaborations and how they can navigate and manage these differences to effectively interact with others in their team and in complex, knowledge transfer collaborations.

Participants will develop the ability to assess and address the needs, resources, and skills required at different stages of the collaboration process, ensuring that they can support and enhance the effectiveness of their teams. Ultimately, participants will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to create inclusive and productive environments, improving the outcomes of their knowledge transfer activities.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

General objective

Equip knowledge transfer professionals with the ability to understand socio-cultural diversities and plurality of collaboration models they encounter in their work. By enhancing their awareness of differences, context, motivations and backgrounds, participants will be better prepared to effectively interact with others in their team and in complex, knowledge transfer collaborations.

Specific ILOs

- **ILO-1:** Explain different cultural models at individual and organizational levels to understand their implications for professional interactions.
- **ILO-2:** Differentiate various collaboration models, motivations, and work approaches used across cultures and disciplines.
- **ILO-3:** Assess the impact of socio-cultural differences on team dynamics and collaborative effectiveness.
- **ILO-4:** Demonstrate effective collaboration with stakeholders from various cultural and professional backgrounds.

Methods & Materials

Teaching Method(s)

- Group discussions & peer feedback
- Role-playing simulations
- Frontal Lecture

Required Learning Materials (during-course)


- Course slides
- Confidential Briefs for the Role-play exercise

Additional Learning Materials

- “Culture Map” Book by Erin Meyer
- Villani, E., Rasmussen, E., & Grimaldi, R. (2017). How intermediary organizations facilitate university–industry technology transfer: A proximity approach. *Technological forecasting and social change*, 114, 86-102.
- Villani, E., & Phillips, N. (2021). Formal organizations and interstitial spaces: Catalysts, complexity, and the initiation of cross-field collaboration. *Strategic Organization*, 19(1), 5-36.

Lesson Plan

20 min	<p>Introduction & Icebreaker - Introduce the session objectives and timetable. Ask participants to play an icebreaker game to get to know each other a little better.</p> <p>Show the list of questions on Slide 5. Pair participants into groups of 2 or 3 people. Ask them to pick 1 to 3 questions to talk about.</p> <p>Objective: The activity aims to encourage people to get to know each other.</p>	Group discussion
40 min	<p>15 min. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions – Trainer introduces Hofstede's 5+1 cultural dimensions. (can also introduce Country Comparison Map)</p> <p>25 min. Group discussion about which cultural dimensions influence KTPs' everyday work. Participants can quickly share their ideas with the rest of the groups.</p> <p><i>Detailed instruction for facilitating the discussion in the slide</i></p>	Theory & Group Discussion
15 min	Break	
30 min	<p>Theory slides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences between Academy & Business, • Socio-cultural differences in KT, • Proximity dimensions, • KT Professional as a Catalyst, • Types of business collaboration. 	Mini-lecture & Q&A
60 min	<p>Guided Role-Play – An informal conversation in a conference between an investor, KT professional and a University-Spinoff Founder. Emphasis on experimenting with cultural and social friction points that hinder KT process.</p>	Structured role-play

	<p>20 min. Preparation 10 min. Role-plays (other participants watch) 30 min. Debriefing & Discussions</p> <p> Confidential Briefs – The First Impression</p> <p>See Trainer Instructions - From The First Impression below.</p>	
15 min	<p>Action Planning & Closing - Participants create action plans for their learnings in real-life situations.</p>	<p>Personal reflection</p>

Trainer Instructions: How to run the “The First Impression” roleplaying exercise

Before the Session

- ☐ Read all the materials
 - ☐ Confidential Briefs (2 Roles)
 - ☐ Trainer Introduction to Role-Play Exercise (below in this document)
 - ☐ Slides
- ☐ Print out confidential briefs for the class
- ☐ Set up the room
 - Ideally, arrange separate spaces for each group
 - Make sure participants keep track of time

During the Session

Introduction (5 minutes)

Explain the purpose of the simulation.

Preparation (20 minutes)

Give confidential briefs to each participant. If the number of participants is different than 2 people you can make groups of 3 people (2 people will have the same role).

Emphasize the importance of active engagement, confidentiality, and staying in role. Participants should not disclose their confidential briefs to others. They can ask you questions if needed.

Simulation (10 minutes)

- Clarify the simulation time.
- Let participants engage freely without interruption.
- Walk around, observe dynamics, but avoid intervening unless needed.
- If necessary, give a 5-minute warning before time is up.

Debriefing (30 minutes)

- Show the summary table
- Give participants feedback
- Show the debriefing questions (Slide 19) to initiate further discussions

Scenario Overview for the Trainer

A university researcher from Italy has developed a promising AI-based diagnostics tool for breast cancer. They're meeting for the first time with a venture capitalist (VC) from the United States interested in funding early-stage health tech ventures in European markets. Both are exploring the possibility of forming a partnership.

Check out the summary table on the next page.

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FOR KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

	Researcher	Investor
Background	Italian, highly specialized in medical AI, seeks funding but is cautious about giving up control. Eager to talk about technical details.	American, interested in business potential. Wants to learn about serious market threats.
Goal	Arrange a formal meeting when the lab results are confirmed in 6 months with the investor. As the investor has a senior position, you prefer to continue talking with the same person. Not with the juniors.	Here to find good investment leads. Direct potential investment opportunities to junior colleagues. Very busy and doesn't prefer to attend the first meetings until the process is mature.
Communication style	Respects hierarchy and authority. Emphasizes his/her own authority and position in the research team. As a senior leader, makes all the important decisions.	Prefers flatter, informal structures. As a senior leader, delegates the important tasks to the lower-level experts.
Triggers (Negative influencers)	Offended by being addressed informally with the first name, confused by silence, sees directness as rudeness.	Dislikes answers that are always optimistic and not specific. This approach triggers a feeling of distrust.
Building rapport (Positive influencers)	If the investor recognizes the hard technical work behind the results, you'd be impressed.	Time is money; punctuality and speed are appreciated. Direct communication is appreciated.