

SPECIAL EVENT

Further thoughts on teaching interculturality in higher education during and after the COVID-19 crisis

4th September 2020

Times:

16:00-18:00 Chinese & Perth Australia times

11am-1pm Finnish time

10am-12pm Dutch/Swedish time

Organised by Fred Dervin (University of Helsinki, Finland), Andreas Jacobsson (Karlstad University, Sweden) and Mei Yuan (Minzu University of China)

Guest speakers:

Amin Atabong, Åbo Akademi

Wei Li, Hainan Medical University

Vivian Liu, Beijing Foreign Studies University

Ashley Simpson, University of Helsinki

Mélodine Sommer, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Xianlin Song & Greg MacCarthy, The University of Western Australia

Register here to get the Zoom address: interculturalcompetences@gmail.com

(IMPORTANT:

- **put 'interculturality + COVID-19 EVENT 2' in the email subject,**
- **provide us with your name, institution, email address**
- **explain why you want to join this event).**

Seminar description:

Following a very successful and stimulating event in July 2020, this new webinar represents another contribution to reflecting on current issues in the teaching of interculturality in higher education, especially in relation to the COVID-19 crisis. New speakers were invited to share their views and reflections for this session (Australia, China, Finland, The Netherlands).

Interculturality is taught in institutions of higher education around the world under different guises (*intercultural communication, intercultural encounters, global competence*, etc.) and in different fields (language, teacher education, health care, business, etc.). The accelerated internationalization that these institutions have experienced for the last decades has also contributed to the popularity of courses around the notion of interculturality. What scholars note about such courses is that the ideologies, theoretical frameworks and methods used for teaching interculturality are many and varied. Furthermore, those who teach interculturality are not always specialists and they can struggle with different kinds of perspectives, paradigms, ideologies, methods...

Many argue that the COVID-19 crisis will have an influence on our lives for the years/decades (?) to come. As far as interculturality is concerned, the crisis has led to very violent acts of xenophobia, Sinophobia, blatant nationalism but also aggressive (systemic) racism and discrimination. At the same time, some of these have been counterbalanced a little by people standing up against them.

Will these have an influence on the way we see interculturality from a higher education perspective, especially on what we teach, from what perspective(s) and how? Is it time for (real) change, beyond the polarization of culturalist/essentialist and postmodern ideologies, in intercultural communication education?

Our speakers, who have taught interculturality in higher education, have been asked to reflect on the following questions (amongst others):

- Do you see this major crisis as a good moment for change in the teaching of interculturality? Why?
- Have you taught interculturality during the COVID-crisis? How different was it and why?
- How did the crisis seem to influence your students in terms of how they reflect on interculturality?
- Has the COVID-crisis already had an influence on how you see interculturality as a scholar, an educator and a person? What aspects have you already considered revising in your research and/or teaching?
- Do you think that you will teach interculturality differently post-COVID-19? Why and how?
- Have you read anything during the crisis that might have had an influence on these questions?
- Finally, could the crisis inspire us to educate/train teachers of interculturality differently?

The session is structured as follows:

- Introduction by organisers (10 min)
- 10-min interventions by speakers (60 min)
- Interaction between the speakers (30 min)
- Interaction with the audience (20 min)

Speakers' biographies

Fred Dervin is Professor of Multicultural Education at the University of Helsinki (Finland). Dervin also holds several distinguished and visiting professorships in Australia, Canada, China, Luxembourg, Malaysia and Sweden. He specializes in intercultural education, the sociology of multiculturalism and student and academic mobility, and has widely published in international journals on identity, the 'intercultural' and mobility/migration.

Andreas Jacobsson, senior lecturer in intercultural studies, Karlstad University, Sweden. Jacobsson's recent research projects are focused on decolonization of intercultural education, interculturality and epistemology, and intercultural film as sources of knowledge in teacher education. Jacobsson has been coordinating the implementation of interculturality in teacher

education at Karlstad University and he has been teaching widely on interculturality and multilingualism in early childhood education.

Mei Yuan is an Associate Professor at the School of Education, Minzu University of China. She specializes in Minzu and intercultural education. She is the co-author of *An Introduction to Ethnic Minority Education in China: Policies and Practices* with Sude and Dervin ([2020](#), Springer).

Aminkeng A Alemanji specialises in issues of race, racism, antiracism and antiracism education. His research focuses on developing different strategies of antiracism education in and out of schools. He has also researched ethnic profiling and hate crimes in Finland. He is currently the Head of a Master's Programme in Social Exclusion at Åbo Akademi University. He is currently involved in developing the first antiracism mobile application in Finland.

Yang Liu, PhD in Intercultural Communication from University of Oklahoma, is currently working as assistant professor at Beijing Foreign Studies University, China. Dr Liu's research focusses on the global surge of Othering of underrepresented groups embedded in international migrations, especially those from the West to China. Dr. Liu has published her studies in prestigious journals globally.

Professor Greg McCarthy was the BHP Chair of Australian Studies at Peking University and now holds an Honorary Research Fellowship at the University of Western Australia. Professor McCarthy has explored the governance of Australian higher education from an elite to a mass global education system, with a stress its integration into a race market.

Dr Ashley Simpson is currently a visiting scholar at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki. He is also the Vice-Director of Shanghai University of Finance and Economics - University of Helsinki joint research centre on Intercultural Studies.

Mélodine Sommer works as an Assistant Professor in Intercultural Communication (Erasmus University Rotterdam). Her work concentrates on the use of culture as a discursive and an interactional resource, and on the outcomes regarding processes of in- and exclusion. Her main research interests include media representations, (cultural) racism, and intercultural education. *Latest publication: Sommer, M. (2020). "How ELSE are you supposed to dress up like a Black Guy?": Negotiating accusations of Blackface in online newspaper comments, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 43(16), 57–75. doi: [10.1080/01419870.2019.1689279](#)*

Xianlin Song is an Associate Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Western Australia. Her recent books include *Governing Asian International Mobility in Australia* (co-authored with Greg McCarthy, Palgrave, 2020), *Everything Changes: Australian Writers and China* (co-edited with Nicholas Jose, UMP, 2019), *Transcultural Encounters in Knowledge Production and Consumption* (co-edited with Youzhong Sun, Springer and HEP, 2018), and *Women Writers in Post Socialist China* (co-authored with Kay Schaffer, Routledge, 2014).