

# Intersecting Cultures: Implications for Leading Learning

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How do you  
view culture?

- **Raise your hands if you agree with the following statements:**
  - Cultures evolve and are dynamic.
  - Cultures are passed on from one generation to the next.
  - Cultures are meant to be preserved.
  - Culture is more than one's nationality and linguistic background.

# Culture defined

- **Broad definition:** shared ways of thinking and being that distinguish one group from another.
- Cultures arise from human interactions.
- Cultures are transmitted, often prescribed, through human interactions.

When and why  
do we define a  
culture?

*In real-world contexts (not academic learning purposes)*

- We are different to them; they are different to us
- Identity, belonging, power, privilege, self-affirmation, survival

# Cultural matters matter

- We are cultural beings; our cultural identities and associations matter to us.
- Cultures influence behaviour and vice-versa: it is enough to *think* or *perceive* that different cultures exist.
- Real and imagined culture

# Multicultural

How would you describe cultural diversity at your school?

- **In one minute, write a short description.**
- **Swap your description with the person next to you. Take a minute to identify key words and ideas from your partner's description.**

# A challenge

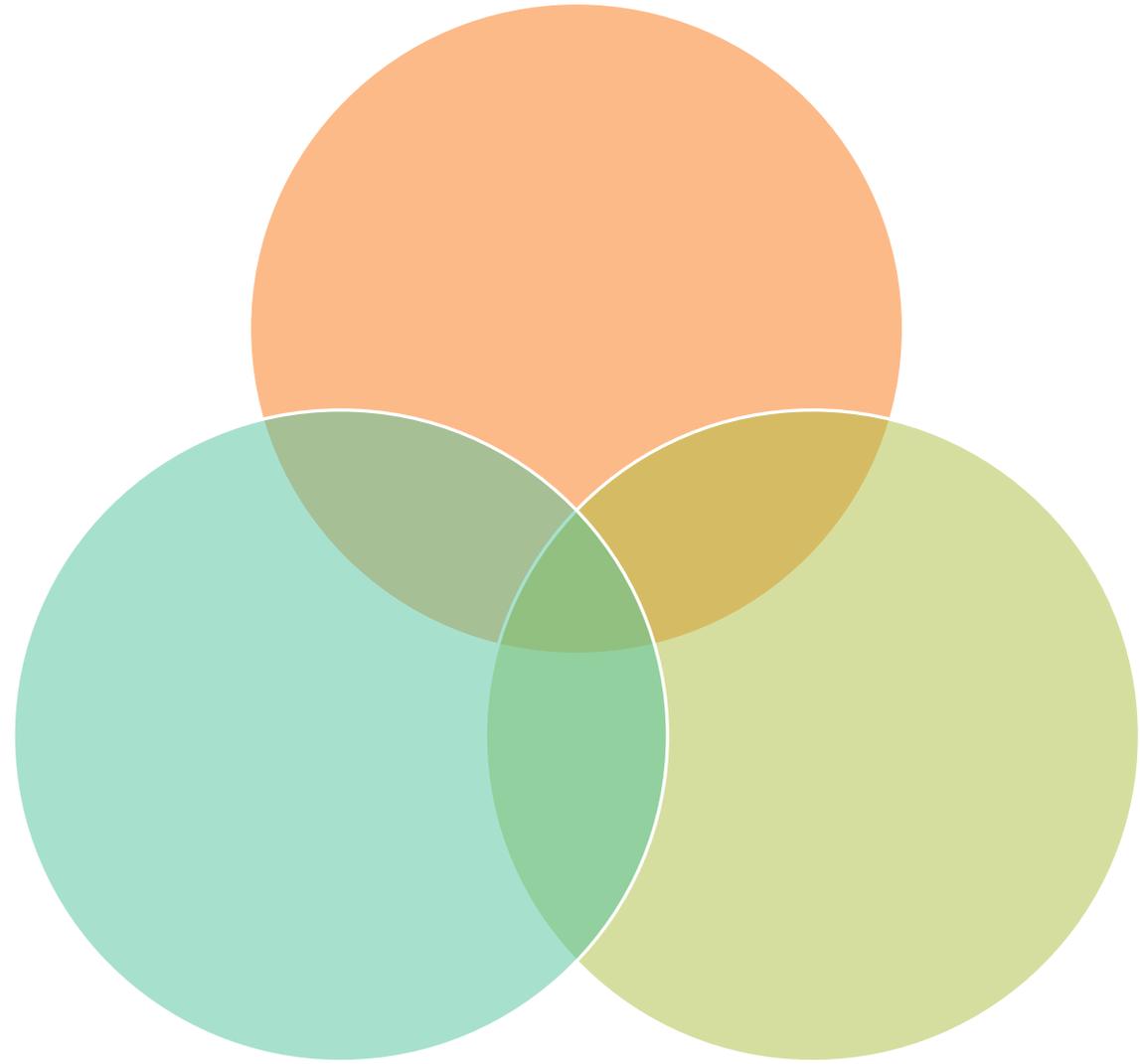
- 'Multicultural' assumes the existence of:
  - distinct, distinguishable cultures (real or imagined)
  - cultural inclusion and exclusion.
- Shift the focus from understanding distinct cultures in isolation to *what happens when cultures meet (cultural intersections)*.

# Intercultural

How would you describe what happens when different cultures meet at your school?

- **In one minute, write a short description from a whole-school perspective.**
- **Swap your description with the person next to you. Take a minute to identify key words and ideas from your partner's description.**

What happens  
when cultures  
meet?



## Changing the premise

- Intercultural learning is so much more than learning about 'other' cultures.
- Intercultural learning is learning that is *relevant*: it recognises the intercultural nature of our world; it enables learners to develop competencies to deal constructively with our intercultural world.
- Interculturality is *everywhere* (if we look hard enough in the right places).

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Learning and  
teaching are  
intercultural  
activities

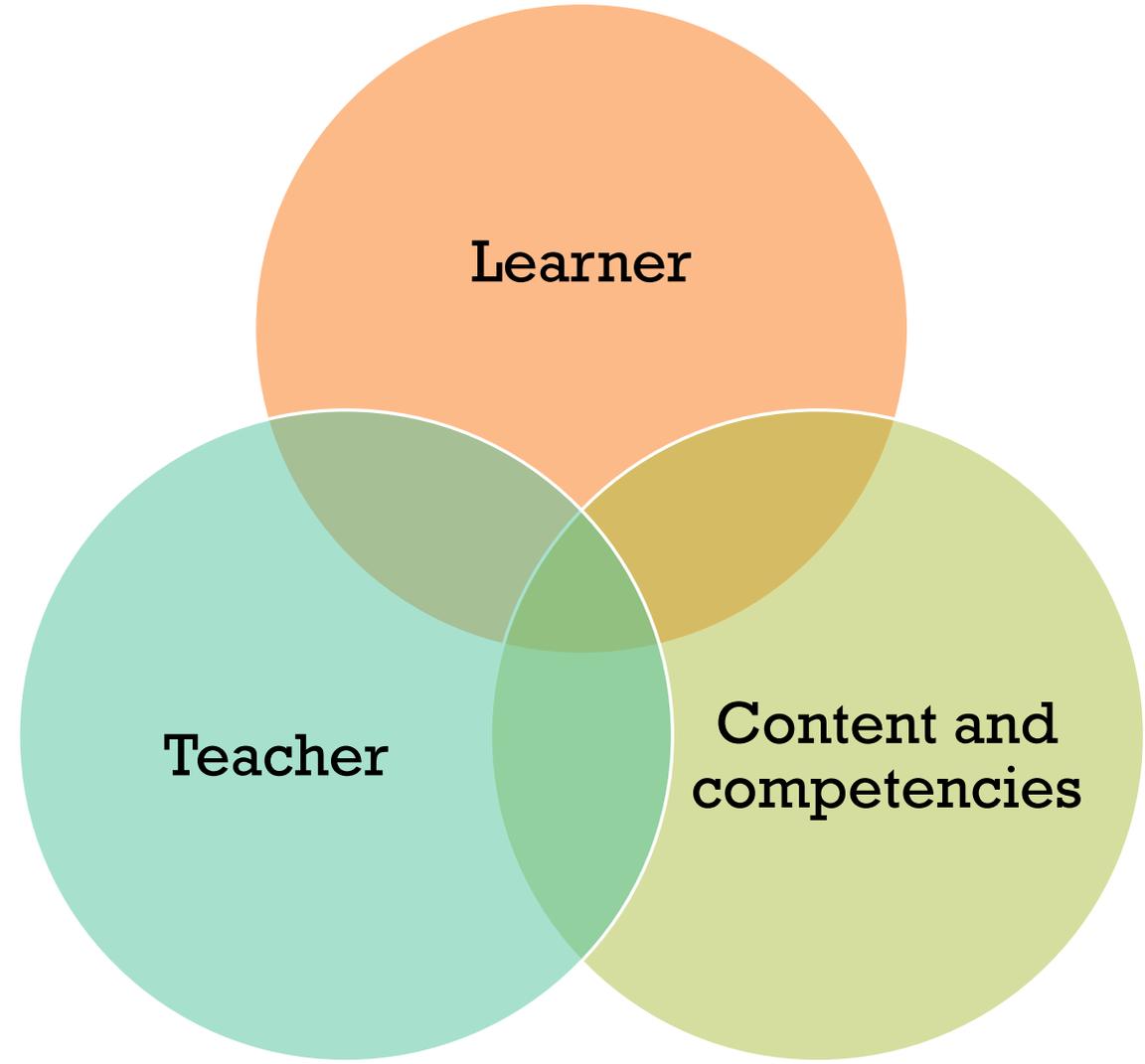
- Learning and teaching are relational activities that involve people with diverse cultural experiences, perspectives, values, and norms.
- Education has been, and continues to be, an intercultural collaboration.
- How we learn and how we teach is culturally influenced.  
**Think about learning and teaching at your school.  
How does it intentionally take into account cultural differences in learning and teaching?**

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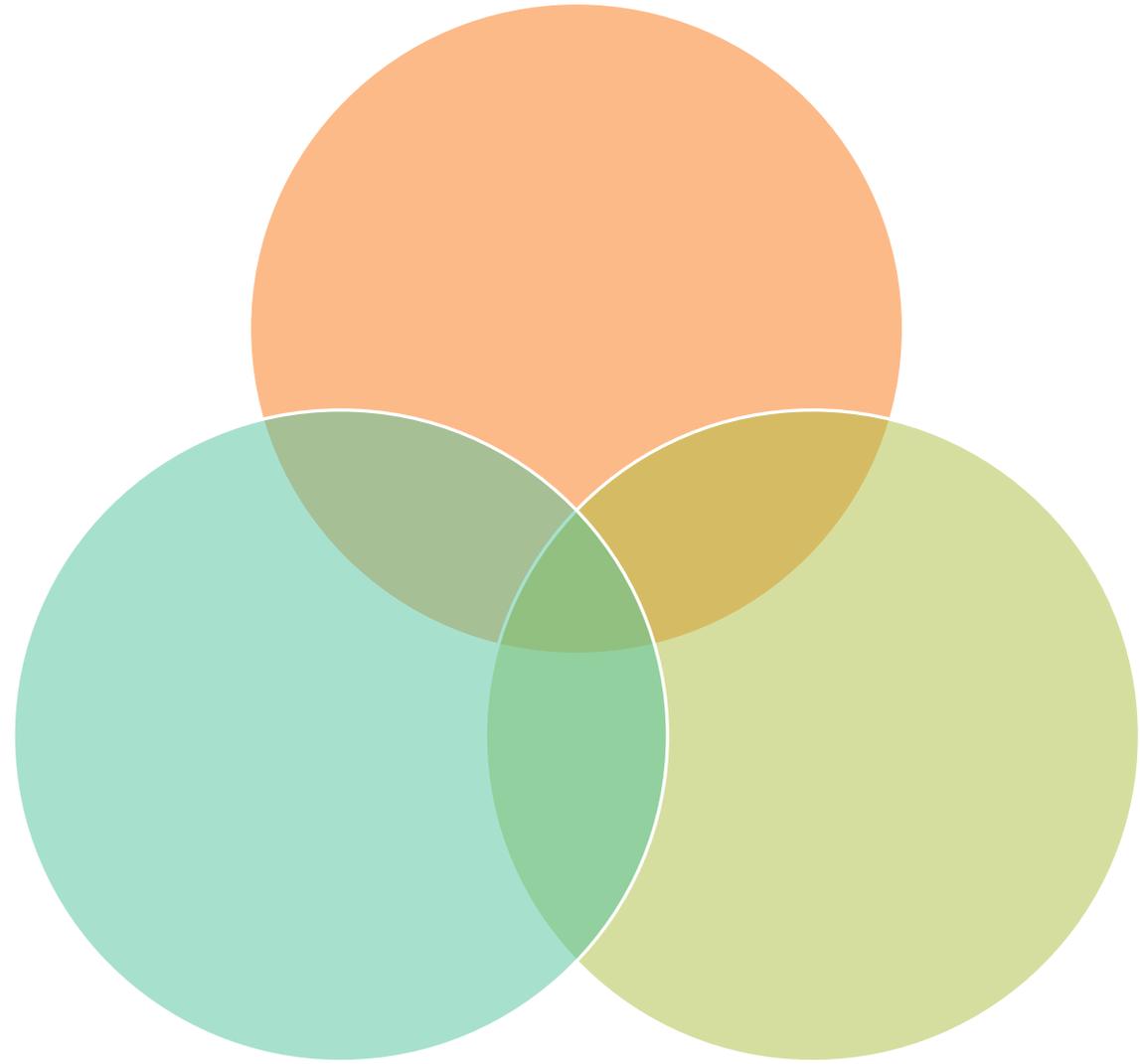
## Implications for leading learning within a globalised education culture

- Globalisation has contributed to the emergence a *globalised education culture*.
- We need to question the cultural underpinnings of what we typically consider to be good educational practices. *How and to what extent are these cross-culturally applicable?*
- Educational practice *does not* occur in a cultural vacuum.

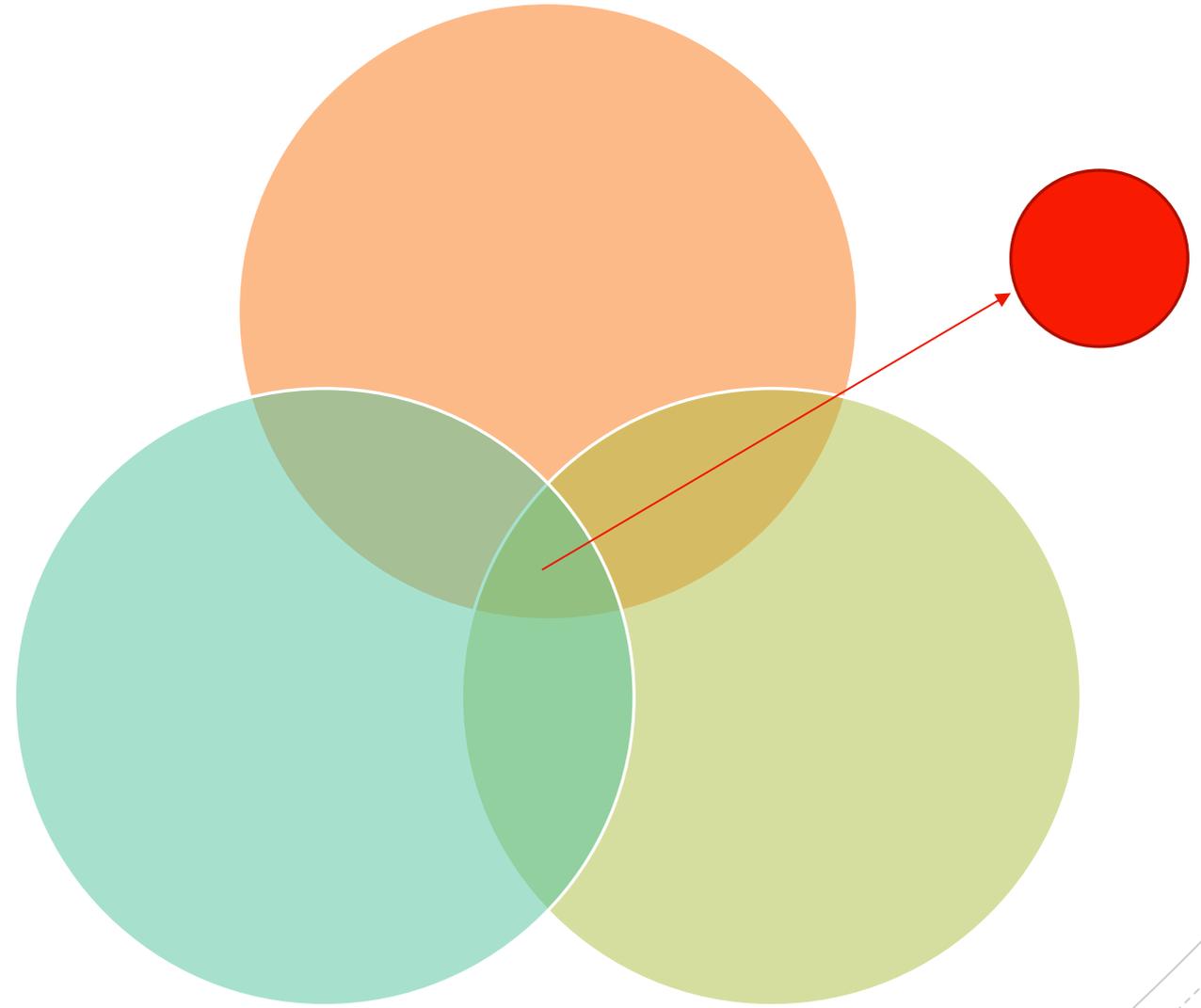
Cultural intersections example



International school students can often find themselves in new (trans)cultural spaces



Transcultural  
spaces can spawn  
new hybrid  
cultural identities



Accidental  
Incidental  
Intentional

- As with all good learning and teaching, cultural intersections should be addressed in a focused and intentional manner
- Typically, however, it is accidental/incidental: 'we do it already because our school community is culturally diverse'.
- How? How much? How well? How do you know?

Using learning taxonomies to lead deep intercultural learning

- Review all learning and teaching related to cultural/intercultural matters against a taxonomy like SOLO or Bloom's:
  - Classify the the school's written curriculum and how it is taught
  - Classify student work samples
  - Identify where deep learning occurs.

# Intercultural mapping of your school

- Map cultural *intersections* for each aspect of your school.
  - This is not a mapping of cultural diversity, but a *map of how cultures are perceived to intersect and the implications of these intersections*. (What happens when cultures meet?)
- Combine all the maps to produce a comprehensive intercultural mapping of your school.
  - The implications identified should provide the basis for deciding what to do next.

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