



## Inclusive communication

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### What is it?

Inclusive communication means conveying information in such a way that all participants feel welcome to participate and all will understand the content. Not only speech, but also body movements, gestures, signing, position, as well as multiple elements of the surrounding context (such as objects) can all become relevant. Communication is multimodal, meaning that messages are conveyed and understood in multiple ways (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting). Messages are also influenced by the receiver's communication skills, attitudes, knowledge, abilities, experiences, social system, and cultural background. The further apart participants are in any of these areas, the more problematic communication becomes. Inclusive communication is relevant to all forms: written and oral, online and face-to-face.

### Who uses the concept?

Inclusive communication as a term is most often used by linguists (to discuss multilingualism), language teachers (for tools used in conveying new information to students), those in disability studies (to discuss tools used to ensure everyone can understand one another), or those in race/ethnicity and/or gender studies.

### Fit with intercultural dialogue?

Anyone participating in multicultural contexts, where people will have diverse backgrounds, needs to consider inclusivity as a

communication strategy. If dialogue is about truly listening to Others, then inclusivity is about the range of Others who are considered potential dialogue partners. Communication requires negotiating intersectional identities and accommodating the needs of dialogue partners.

### What work remains?

In addition to research into a wide range of areas, from gender to autism, training is needed to promote diversity and inclusion in communication across contexts. This will enable each of us to become aware of our social biases, and how unconscious biases affect others.

### Resources

- Lin, C.-C., & Sequeira, L. (Eds.). (2017). *Inclusion, diversity, and intercultural dialogue in young people's philosophical inquiry*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Sense.
- Myers, K. A., Spudich, C., Spudich, D., & Laux, S. E. (2012). *Saving face: Inclusive communication with college students with disabilities using politeness and face negotiation*. *Journal of Diversity Management*, 7(2), 97-108