



Cultural Agility

Fostering an inclusive classroom culture

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South Africa - NWU

[New Frontiers of Greatness: Discover Your Journey at the NWU](#)







Strategic plans 2024 and beyond: Amongst others

NWU

Welcoming element: A socially cohesive and culturally inclusive environment where all students and staff are welcome and comfortable.

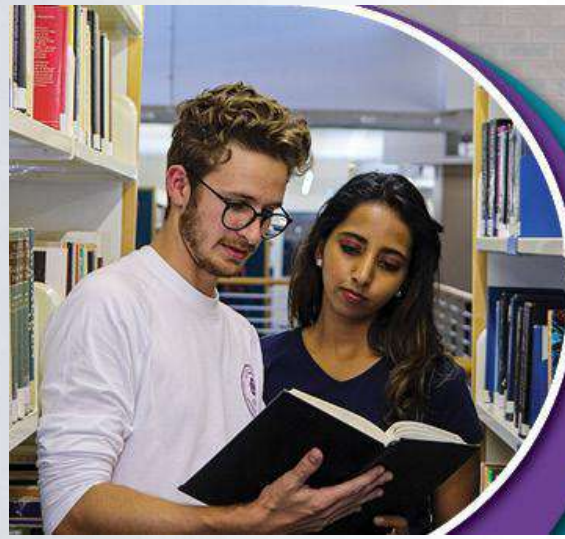
Inclusive element: Building an achievement orientated environment where diversity is celebrated and diverse talents are recognized, integrated and utilised.

Caring and inclusive: We consider the well-being of all our students and staff, and act in an inclusive and caring manner towards our NWU community

Embracing diversity: We build an inclusive university community that embraces differences and respects the rights and dignity of its members.



FEDU



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Innovative: We embrace agility and transformation to adapt to a rapidly changing environment, fostering pioneering educational methods.

Social Cohesion: Through diversity and multiculturalism, we cultivate excellent social skills, promoting a culture of inclusivity and collaboration.

Agents of change: With education as a catalyst, we aspire to transform lives and societies, instilling a sense of purpose in our community.



Before we introduce cultural agility



Let me share some research ...

My PhD (2019)

University House Committee members' depictions of residence traditions: A learning and cultural agility programme

Conceptualising traditions ... residence traditions in a SA context
Had to develop a programme for student leaders.

- Why Cultural agility??

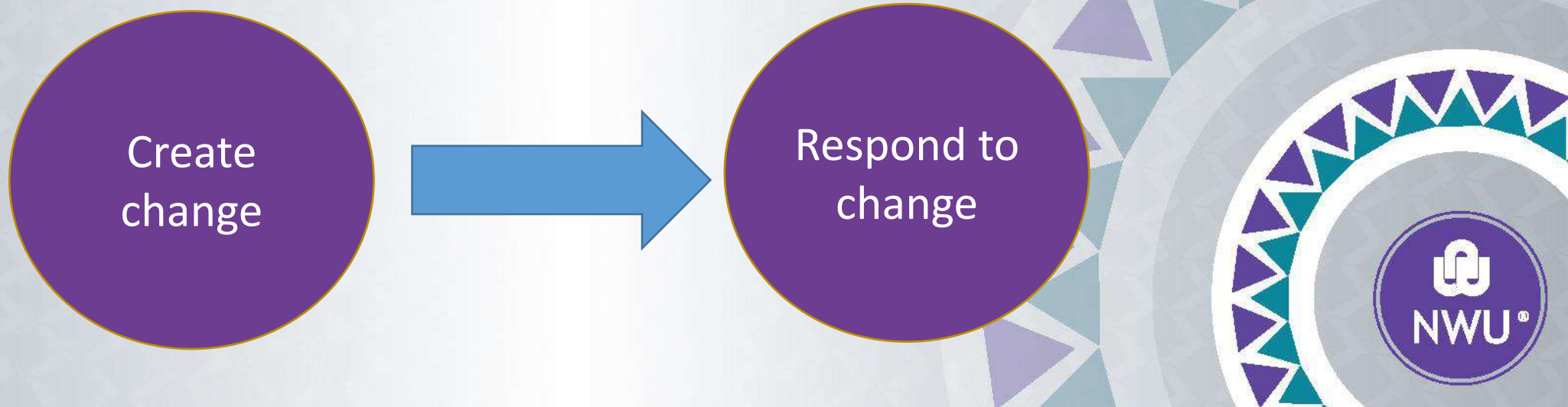


So, what is Cultural agility then?

AGILITY...

In general speaking terms *agility* is defined as the ability of the body or mind to move quickly, create change and respond to change.

Agility (or being agile) within an organisational context is a *mind-set*.



Where does it come from?

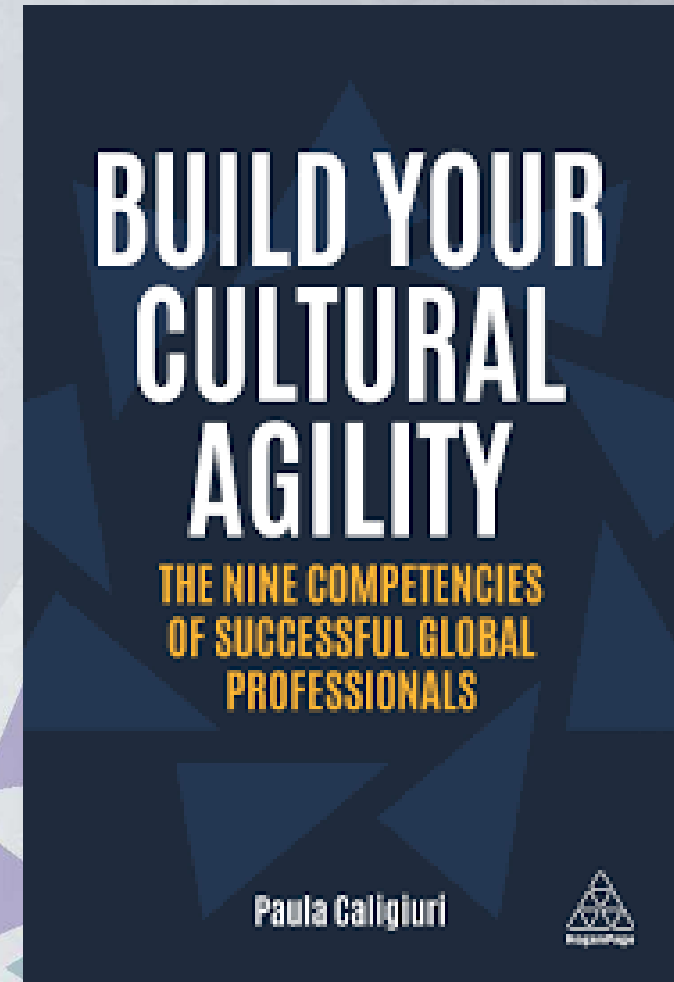
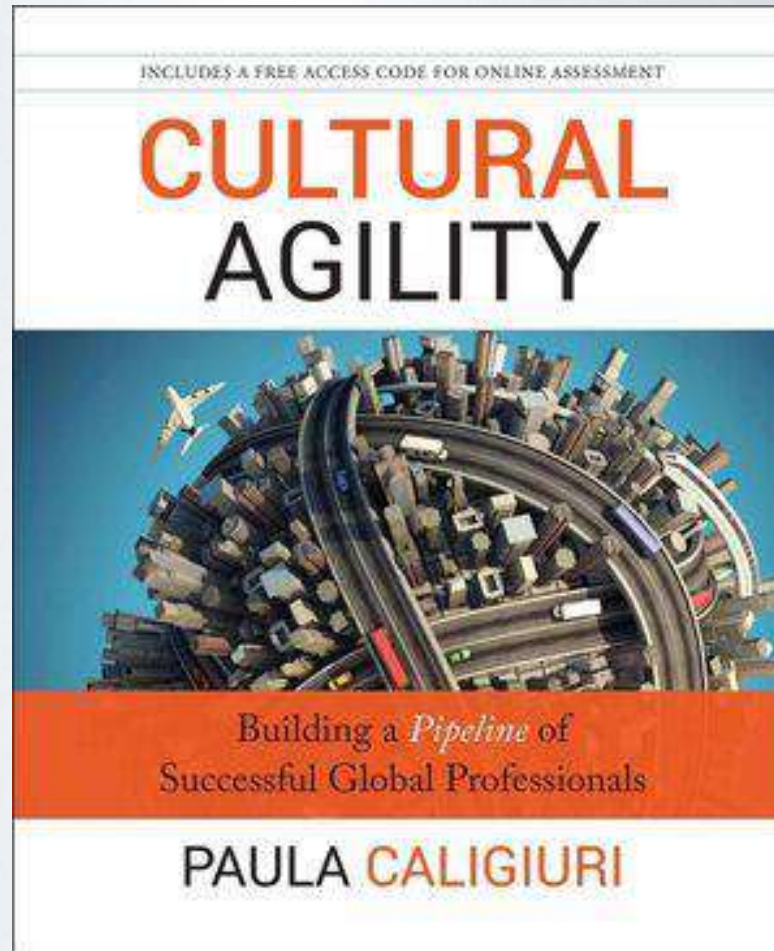
- The mind-set of cultural agility is fairly new.
- To date, cultural agility has mostly been implemented and applied in business management contexts including international executives and managerial level staff (McCormick Benhalim & Malcolm, 2014:2).
- However, it can be argued that cultural agility be implemented in the educational context.

UNFAIR
ADVANTAGE



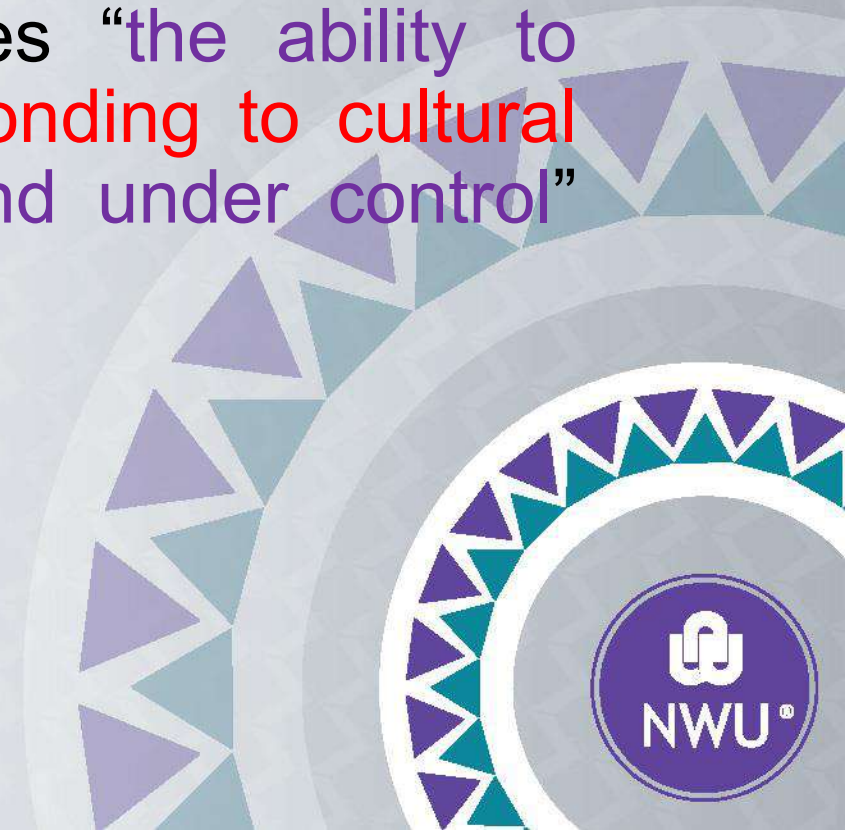
Paula Caligiuri's Work on Cultural Agility

She argues that cultural agility is **essential** for **anyone** who works **internationally or in diverse teams**, emphasizing the importance of developing this competence **to avoid misunderstandings** and **foster productive working relationships** across cultures.



Cultural agility can be viewed as a mind-set and ability an individual has to “accurately perceive and respond effectively across a range of nuanced cultural experiences and situations” (McCormick Benhalim & Malcolm, 2014:2).

Cultural agility includes more than just diversity, multi-cultural and cross-cultural context training, it includes “the ability to communicate and build relationships by responding to cultural ambiguity and making adjustments rapidly and under control” (Randall, 2011:3).



Caligiuri identifies several key competencies that are essential for developing cultural agility:

1. Cultural Minimization:

This involves the **ability to recognize cultural differences** but minimize their impact on work relationships. It requires professionals to focus on common goals and **shared interests rather than letting cultural differences create barriers**.

2. Cultural Adaptability:

This competency is **the ability to adapt one's behaviour, communication style, and work practices to different cultural contexts**. Culturally agile individuals can modify their approach to fit the cultural norms and expectations of the people they are working with.

3. Cultural Learning:

Cultural learning is the **ongoing process of acquiring knowledge** about different cultures. It includes **being open to new experiences, learning from others, and applying that knowledge** to improve cross-cultural interactions.

4. Resilience:

Emotional resilience is critical for handling the stress and challenges that come with working in unfamiliar cultural environments. This competency involves **staying positive, maintaining flexibility, and bouncing back from setbacks in cross-cultural situations**.

Competencies affecting behavioural responses

- 1) Cultural minimization
- 2) Cultural adaption
- 3) Cultural integration

Competencies affecting individuals' psychological ease cross-culture

- 4) Tolerance of ambiguity
- 5) Appropriate self-efficacy
- 6) Cultural curiosity and desire to learn

Competencies of a cultural agile individual

Competencies affecting individuals' cross-cultural interactions

- 7) Valuing diversity
- 8) Ability to form relationships
- 9) Perspective-taking

Competencies affecting decisions in a cross-cultural context

- 10) Knowledge and integration of cultural issues
- 11) Receptive to adopting diverse ideas
- 12) Divergent thinking and creativity

These competencies are not only vital for business professionals but also **highly relevant for educators, particularly those preparing to teach in diverse and multicultural classrooms.**



Relevance to Teacher Education

Why Include Cultural Agility in Pre-Service Teacher Training??

The classrooms of today and tomorrow are **increasingly diverse**, with students coming from a wide range of cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

For future teachers, developing cultural agility is not just beneficial—it is essential.

Culturally agile teachers are better equipped to manage and thrive in these diverse environments, where understanding and adapting to different cultural norms and values can significantly impact the effectiveness of their teaching.



More recently – What we do ...

- We have added cultural agility in our module teaching – life skills for educators. Trying to change the mind-set and establish and produce *agents of change*
- Book chapter (forthcoming)

CHAPTER 1: Cultural agility: Equipping HEI students for diversity and inclusion through WIL excursions

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Abstract

Unlike some of the other chapters that report on empirical studies, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of theories that underpin a concept so readers can have a solid foundation

Your cultural agility can be developed...
... it is a skill and a mindset that should be practiced
DAILY



Let's share



Share your emoji's



Use your cell phone for this activity

On the **WhatsApp group** – August 2024 –
International Training week

Depict your own views of what **diversity** is by
making use of ANY 3 emoji's

List the 3 emoji's one after the other.

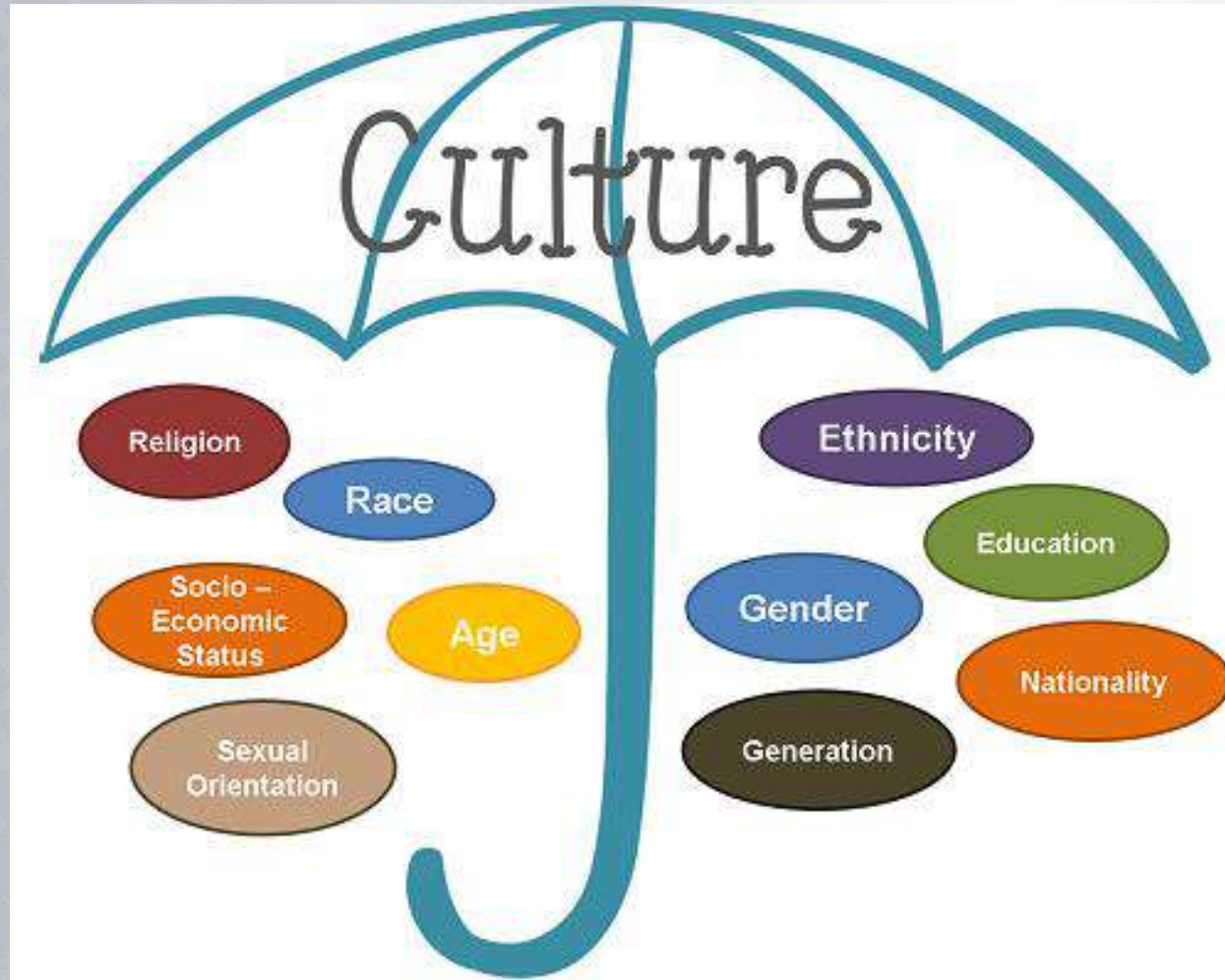
For example



Another way to reflect about diversity and be culturally agile



Diversity has a wide variety of characteristics that describes people as unique beings including differences in:



In the lesson plan:

Context analysis: / Analise van konteks:

The lesson will take place in a private school in the Suburb of Vereeniging. Each class has 20 learners in this Grade.

The school is neat with sufficient desks and chairs, proper lighting, electricity and equipment for a Power Point presentation.

Most learners come from a middle class socio economic background, and the majority are African students whose Home Language is English. The learners with learning barriers or physical disabilities have been placed in the front rows of the class for a clearer vision of the presentation and to monitor more closely.

Each learner has a Solutions for All Life Orientation Grade 11 textbook. Each student also has a notebook to make notes and do class activities in.

The school can provide copies of worksheets and assessments which needs to be pasted in the learner's notebooks after the lesson.

Context analysis:

Good learners. Multi-cultural class.

Poor with no resources

How can you as a teacher / lecturer create an inclusive classroom culture?



When we meet somebody from a culture other than our own, we are more likely to unconsciously regard them as our enemies than as somebody to learn something new from ...



Let's watch this ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jD8tjhVO1Tc>

