Intercultural competence is **the capacity to shift cultural perspectives** between your own culture and the cultures of others. Not only does intercultural competence allow you to shift these perspectives, but you can also adapt your behavior to both differences and commonalities in culture.

### What Do We Mean When We Refer to Culture?

Culture can be defined as patterns of perception, values, and behaviors learned by a member of a particular population. Culture can be . . .

- **Objective:** visible aspects that are created by a group of people, such as art, food, and dress.
- **Subjective:** less visible patterns of interpretations learned by the group of people, such as attitudes, norms, and values/beliefs.

Intercultural competence exists in the subjective aspects of culture as it offers a unique opportunity for deeper understanding and growth.

### Cultural Understanding is Key

Each of us has learned and internalized our culture through the groups that we belong to. **It is important to understand our own culture and how we make sense of cultural differences in order to fully understand the culture of others.** This is called cultural self-understanding. How to make sense of differences in another culture (deeper cultural other-understanding), is equally as important to become a more interculturally competent individual.

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**The Office of Career and Global Engagement** exists to cultivate and engage students within the college to become effective leaders, successful graduates, and globally competitive professionals.
Why is Intercultural Competence Important to Employers?

As the world becomes increasingly more interdependent, it is likely that you will encounter opportunities in the workplace to interact with others from different cultures. Intercultural competence is a valuable skill as employers are seeking to hire individuals who are able to:

- Understand and value cultural differences
- Recognize the strengths and limitations of their own cultural differences
- Recognize and effectively dissolve conflict in the workplace in a manner that respects cultural differences
- Manage teams of people successfully from diverse backgrounds
- Promote an inclusive work environment where all members of the organization feel valued and engaged

How Can You Enhance Your Intercultural Competence?

- Participate in a study abroad program, international internship, or virtual global learning experience. Contact Career and Global Engagement for more information
- Take a course(s) with a cross-cultural theme - examples in the College of Business include: ECON 3100, FIN 4110, LAW 4200, MKT 4270, MGT 4230
- Seek a minor or double-major in a foreign language
- Complete the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) Certificate through the Office of Global Engagement
- Participate in learning opportunities provided by the Gantt Multicultural Center
- Engage in service experiences offered by Center for Student Leadership and Engagement
- Read a book about another culture that highlights cultural differences and similarities
- Watch a TV show, movie, or theatrical performance with a cross-cultural theme and discuss the concepts with others
- Travel to another region of the U.S. you are not familiar with or outside of the country where you can observe and engage in cultural diversity
- Keep an intercultural journal where you reflect on cross-cultural interactions that highlight differences and similarities between cultures

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