

Dr Thiru Kandiah argues that intercultural miscommunications are not merely caused by differences in shared knowledge and this is affirmed by Shea.

What part might ideology be said to play in such miscommunications?

How might that impact an intercultural VET experience?

Shea's (1994) study is a compelling example of how lack of interactional cooperation rather than lack of shared knowledge can lead to communication difficulties. Shea examined the interactions occurring in two advising sessions in which a non-native English-speaking student requested a letter of recommendation from two native English-speaking academic advisers. With one, his request was successful; with the other it was not. Shea argued that the different outcomes resulted not from a difference in shared knowledge of contextualisation cue use between the advisers and the student, but rather from the advisers' use of different structuring strategies. In the successful session, the adviser attempted to move past communicative difficulties with the student to construct a shared understanding of what the student was requesting by using affiliating strategies like amplification, requests for clarification and agreement markers. In the unsuccessful interaction, the adviser treated the different cues as obstacles to achieving understanding, using distancing strategies such as interruptions, and exclusions to control the interaction and thereby position the student as 'a disfluent, inappropriate outsider' (Shea, 1994: 25). The different strategies used by the advisers, Shea argued, are rooted not in communicative styles, but in ideological orientations towards the non-native speaker of English.