**Bloom’s Taxonomy: The affective domain**

When most people discuss Bloom’s taxonomy, the model that is usually considered is the cognitive domain. There are, however, three domains: the cognitive, the sensory and the affective.

The affective domain is very useful for us when considering intercultural communication. This is because it provides a framework that describes behaviours. Behaviours are connected to and motivated by feelings and sentiments. Feelings and sentiments connect closely with the core values, attitudes and motivations held by individuals.

The iceberg of culture depicted how innermost core values ultimately impacted on behaviour. One aspect of behaviour that is prominent in the field of intercultural studies is communication – in all its forms and styles. The way that we communicate, regardless of the form, style, medium, purpose or audience, is influenced by our values, attitudes and motivations. Similarly, the way in which any communication is received, interpreted or understood, is connected to those same core values.

In order to develop communicative competence, we need to consciously work towards demonstrating behaviours which are located at the higher end of the affective taxonomy. It is even more important to operate at the higher levels of the affective domain when communication will take place across a cultural threshold. This is because, moving from one cultural ‘location’ to another, can be like entering an area of blurred meanings, which can, on occasions, impede or inhibit communication or lead to a greater number of miscommunications taking place.

Bloom’s taxonomy of the affective domain can be represented a pyramid. The behaviours at the base of the pyramid are those that require the least conscious action. As we move up the pyramid from the base, we can begin to chart a journey towards maximising our communicative competence.

The pyramid model is useful here, in that it shows us how the almost universal aspect of communication, that of receiving phenomena, prompts a response to what has been received. From there, we begin to ascribe value(s) to what has been received and then organise the information so as to make sense of it. Eventually we internalise the information that has been communicated. To extend another metaphor, it could be said that we position it within our personal iceberg.