Culture and Culture Shock

January 6, 2016
Session 1: Culture & Culture Shock
Session 2: Integration, Canadian Culture, & Syrian Culture
Session 3: Cross-Cultural & ESL Communication
Session 4: Building Welcoming Communities
Intercultural competence requires the ability to participate in the social life of people who live according to different unwritten rules.

(Hofstede, 2009)
Agenda

• Welcome
• Activity #1 – Personal Introductions
• What is Culture?
• Activity #2 – Four Analogies: Discussion
• Ten Aspects of Culture & The Diversity Wheel
• Activity #3 – Human Values Continuum
• What is Culture Shock?
• Activity #4 – Yes/No
• Final Reflection: How Can I Help?
• Wrap-up
Learning Objectives for this Workshop

- **To learn** about culture and culture shock
- **To experience**, even on a small level, cultural dissonance
- **To access** further resources available to you
Activity #1 - Introductions

• Activity: Introducing Yourself
• Stand up and face a nearby person you don’t know.
• Introduce yourselves and chit-chat for a bit.
• Find a new person and repeat. Try to talk to 2 or 3 people during the 5 minute activity.
• Return to your seat for follow-up.
Activity #2 - What is culture?

- Four analogies - look at the picture on your table and discuss with your group:
  - What is the similarity between the object in front of you and culture?
  - What insight does this give you about how to work effectively across cultures?
What is culture?

- “That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” – E.B. Tylor, 1871

- “The way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time.” – Cambridge English Dictionary
The Truth

- “The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.”
  – Oscar Wilde
Ten Aspects of Culture*

- Sense of self and space
- Communication and language
- Dress and appearance
- Food and eating habits
- Time and time consciousness
- Relationships
- Values and norms
- Beliefs and attitudes
- Mental processes and learning
- Work habits and practices

*Gardenswartz and Rowe, 2010
DIVERSITY WHEEL

Geographic/Regional Location

English Language Ability

Employment Status

Level of Education

Racial/Cultural Identity

Aboriginal peoples

Urban/Rural

Age

Ancestry

Immigration Status

Place of Origin

Citizenship

Creed/Religion

Family Status

Caregiving Responsibilities

Record of Offences

Physical Activity & Abilities

Marital Status

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Activity #3 – Human Values Continuum
Cultural Values
Recommended Resources #1

- “Population Profile: Syrian Refugees” and “Refugees from Syria”
  www.immigratemanitoba.com/Syria/refugee-news-and-resources
- “Guide to Understanding Halal Foods”
- “Centre for Intercultural Learning” – Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development Canada
  www.intercultures.gc.ca > “Country Insights”

Cultural Information – Syria: Communication Styles

  Local Perspective:
  For Canadian men: Women with a head cover (hijab) are seen regularly in Syria. Some shake hands with men, others will not. The best way to deal with such a situation is to greet those women by putting your hand on your chest and say "Good morning" or "hello". If the woman extends her hand, then you may shake it. Women can shake hands with women without awkwardness.
  If you are sitting in front of a Syrian, do not cross your legs with the sole of your shoe facing him/her (it is insulting).
  Syrians stand close to each other and may hug or clasp hands. People of the same gender sometimes walk hand in hand. They may also touch you on the shoulder. This does not indicate homosexual tendencies.
  Keep eye contact when communicating.
What is culture shock?

[Diagram: Culture Shock Curve]

- Honeymoon
- Culture shock
- Adjustment
- Mastery

Happiness vs. Time
Factors influencing the severity of culture shock*

- **Situational/Structural**
  - Cultural distance
  - Job conditions and satisfaction
  - Positive social interaction with locals
  - Time span of cultural interaction
  - Frequency of contact with people from host culture
  - Degree of intimacy of cultural contact

- **Individual/Personal**
  - Language proficiency/communication skills
  - Prior experience in other cultures
  - Personality traits

*Muecke A, Lenthall S, Lindeman M, 2010*
Stages of change

The transition cycle - a template for human responses to change (Williams, 1999)
Activity #4 – Yes/No

• Find a partner (groups of two).
• Start playing “Twenty Questions” – try to guess an object in the room by asking only yes/no questions.
• Variation: continue the game, but move your head in the opposite way when answering yes/no. E.g., nod for “no” and shake for “yes.”
Recommended Resource #2

- “God Grew Tired of Us” DVD
- 40-60 min mark of the movie, watch for the “Honeymoon” and “Culture Shock” experiences of the refugees
Final Reflection: How Can I Help?

• Think back to everything we've just learned about culture, diversity, and culture shock.
• As a member of the host community, how can I help? What will I do?
Next session: Integration, Canadian Culture, and Syrian Culture

• Integration – who’s job is it? Who should adapt? Should “we” change or should “they”?

• What is Canadian culture anyway? What do newcomers face and experience when they come here?

• What is Syrian culture? What are some “do’s” and “don’ts” tips?
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Evaluation Forms

• Include your email address and I can send you links and a copy of this PowerPoint.