

Script to support Power Point entitled: Basic Principles of Cultural/Intercultural Competence

Slide 1: Title slide –Basic Principles of Cultural/Intercultural Competence

Note: The study of intercultural relations has come into being and discussed widely in the last twenty years, based on theory and research in international and business. But just until recently, the major domestic application of intercultural communication was considered and discussed. Now, however, the intercultural perspective is being applied more generally to issues of domestic diversity, as evidenced by some of the new multicultural literature and by current text in the intercultural field. This provides some of the justification for the change of terminology from “cultural competencies” to “intercultural competencies”.

Slide 2: Definition is straight forward! Facilitator might want to discuss additional definitions as follows:

“A process of learning that leads to an ability to effectively respond to the challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of social cultural diversity in a defined social system.”

Or

defined as the ability of individuals and organizations to use academic, experiential, and interpersonal skills to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. It encompasses an individuals and/or organization's desire, willingness, and ability to improve systems by drawing on diverse values, traditions, and customs.

Or

Cultural/Intercultural competence is the overall capability of an individual or organization to manage key challenging features of intercultural communication: namely, cultural difference and unfamiliarity, inter-group dynamics, and the tensions and conflicts that can accompany this process. It is a two-way interactive process that requires both the ability to stress the common aspects of human life and the will to solve conflicts that emerge from the differences between people of different backgrounds.

Slide 3: These principles were researched and developed by the National REACH Center in located in Seattle. REACH is an acronym for Respecting Ethnic and Cultural Heritage. These basic principles serve as the foundation for development of the center's multicultural educational curriculum.

Slide 4: Multiple Perspectives – it is important to note that most of our history is written from a European American point of view. This does not mean that point of view is wrong, but it is only one of many points of view. We have not had the privilege of hearing other voices e.g. African-American, Native/American Indians, Hispanic/Latino Americans, Asian Americans, or Middle Easterners who may have had a different perspective on issues. We must realize that there are multiple perspectives among people even family members due to different backgrounds and experiences. It is very apparent that there is more than one way to interpret what we see. Multiple perspectives help us to find solutions to what might seem to be an impossible problem.

Slide 5: Culture is something Everybody has. Multicultural education starts with everyone understanding their own roots and culture. Culture is an inclusive term because everyone has a culture. Each of our families is a sub-culture of the larger community culture and every individual and family has unique qualities based on their culture.

Slide 6: Just read slide and ask question “What is culture to me?”

Slide 7: Discuss characteristics of culture listed on the slide. This slide does not require a long discussion.

Slide 8: Ten Elements of Culture – Review the definition of culture and briefly discuss the ten elements listed on the slide. This slide does not require a long discussion.

Slide 9: Culture is like an Iceberg – Inform participants that 1/7 of the iceberg, the tip, is all that we see when we interact briefly with another person. It is the 6/7 of the iceberg, the part below the water level that we don't see or consider important. We each have many

Slide 10: Our behavior, beliefs, values, and thought patterns are below the water level and are aspects of us that we cannot see. Like an iceberg, most of who we are is not immediately apparent.

Slide 11: Objective or Surface Culture – aspects of our culture that are easy to recognize, e.g. clothes, language, food dance, art, and etc. It is understanding the arts, literature, history, political structures, social systems, etc...of various cultures. However, knowing the objective culture of a group does not prepare us for relating to people that belong to that particular culture.

- Slide 12: However, on the other hand, we need to place emphasis on the subjective or deep culture –aspects of us that are not easily recognized, e.g. communication styles, thought patterns, rituals, ordering of time, patterns of handling emotions, approaches to problem solving, and etc.....of various cultures. Much of the subjective or deep culture is never analyzed and yet can direct our lives and actions in significant and powerful ways. Getting to know someone on a deeper level has proven to be effective and helps to break down and overcome barriers.
- Slide 13: A Cultural definition of Diversity – It is important to help European Americans realize that they have a cultural heritage too. So when we refer to ethnic groups and ethnicity we are talking about everyone. Facilitator can pause and conduct the Group Aerobics Activity just using the “Heritage” section.
- Slide 14: Generalizations vs. Stereotyping (Taken from Gary Weaver’s presentation)
The distinction between these two concepts is useful in intercultural education. It is possible to generalize about the “preponderance of belief or behavior” represented by any one culture; but such generalizations should be viewed as hypotheses in approaching a culture—a starting point that can be proved wrong in any one instance. Stereotyping refers to a rigid “picture” that supposedly matches every person in a group. Stereotyping can be generated by applying generalizations; but then not dropping them when proved inaccurate.
- Slides 15 & 16: Path of Intercultural Learning – we want to move up the pathway from ethnocentrism to eventually multiculturalism. Explain that people are at different points along the path, but we are all striving to make it to the end of the path. Emphasize that this is a lifelong process.
- Slide 17: Building Cultural Bridges – Explain that we are all multiethnic because we are born into this group. Multicultural represents that which we learn. We are all shaped by various components of culture----language, gender, social class, religion, etc. Most of the time these components reflect the overlay of the ethnic groups we are born into, but not in all cases. The Global dimension refers to groups outside the borders of the United States. Most ethnic Americans have ancestral roots in the global dimension. However, there are cultural similarities and differences between ethnic Americans and their global ethnic group. Emphasize that we need to build bridges of understanding between and among all three groups.
- Slide 18-20: Building Cultural Bridges – Present the information on these slides as a rationale for building bridges between different cultural groups.

Slide 21: Head, Heart, Hands, and Healing – It is important that we teach and people learn on all four levels. The *head* portion of training is gathering factual information on a group(s) to gain a deeper and better understanding. The *heart* deals with our feeling, emotions, and attitudes. Our *hands* are involved with the application of ideas through socially responsible action in our communities. *Healing* is being able to have a greater respect for all people.

Slide 22: Co-Responsibility – Co-responsibility deals with our connectedness to other people. It challenges each of us to speak out for social justice, even when we are not directly affected by a specific issue. It helps us to understand that we need to move beyond our narrow self interest and to the issues and interest of others. The outcome is community building and stewardship for others. We share in the problem-solving responsibility with social action as the outcome.