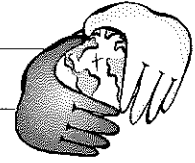


☞ Unit 4 Activity: Intercultural Effectiveness... ☞

DEPENDS UPON THE UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE

Intercultural Effectiveness



Read these paragraphs with a partner and discuss the questions below with her. After you have pooled your ideas, share them with the rest of your LWML group.

Culture is part and parcel of virtually every aspect of our lives and most of us are completely unaware of this. Behaviors appropriate to their culture are taught to children by their parents and other members of their society/country. Because that learning is such a natural part of life, we are generally unconscious of its influence on the manner in which we perceive the world and interact within it.

All individuals exist within a culture, so culture is taught to and learned from others in our families, communities, and countries. When we work with people from our own culture, we obviously share the same cultural behaviors and values. We do not have to constantly negotiate the meaning of each word and action we take. Sharing cultures with another person can increase our own efficiency in working with her because we “just understand” what the other person is doing and why.


When we live and work with people of cultures different from our own, we may find our cultural differences impede our ability to understand and work effectively together. We cannot just “take for granted” that we understand what the other person is doing and why, nor can we just “take for granted” that she or he understands what we are doing and why.

Adapted from the Centre for Intercultural Learning, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, 2007

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean that “sharing a culture with another person can increase our own efficiency in working with her”?

2. The third paragraph above states that when we live and work with people of cultures different from our own, “we may find our cultural differences impede our ability to understand and work effectively together”. List some examples from your own life, work, or travels where you had difficulty understanding or working together with someone from another culture. You may even remember some examples from a movie or TV show you have seen, or stories you have heard from friends’ travels.

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3. Since culture is “taught to and learned from others in our families, communities, and countries”, it is logical that we should be able to learn about a new culture and put those acquired understandings into practice by deepening relationships with people of other cultures.

List 5 ideas your LWML group could pursue to deepen relationships with people of other cultures. Make your suggestions specific, practical, and doable.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

4. Gather all your ideas into one list. Then, if you are ready, decide which one or two ideas you would like to pursue. If your group isn't quite ready to decide yet, you may want to come back to this activity after completing all of the activities in the workshop.