Chapter 1 : Themes: Similarities and Differences Between Cultures - Oxford Scholarship

in order to promote learning about diversity. â€¢ It is important that the classroom activities lead children in discovering diversity as a normal part of life and, at the same time.

Why is understanding culture important if we are community builders? What kind of cultural community can you envision for yourself? As community builders, understanding culture is our business. No matter where you live, you are working with and establishing relationships with people--people who all have cultures. Here is one viewpoint. It includes groups that we are born into, such as race, national origin, gender, class, or religion. It can also include a group we join or become part of. For example, it is possible to acquire a new culture by moving to a new country or region, by a change in our economic status, or by becoming disabled. When we think of culture this broadly we realize we all belong to many cultures at once. How might this apply to you? Why is culture important? It influences their views, their values, their humor, their hopes, their loyalties, and their worries and fears. So when you are working with people and building relationships with them, it helps to have some perspective and understanding of their cultures. We are all human beings. We all love deeply, want to learn, have hopes and dreams, and have experienced pain and fear. This chapter will give you practical information about how to understand culture, establish relationships with people from cultures different from your own, act as an ally against racism and other forms of discrimination, create organizations in which diverse groups can work together, overcome internalized oppression, and build strong and diverse communities. This section is an introduction to understanding culture, and will focus on: What culture is The importance of understanding culture in community building Envisioning your cultural community How to get started in building communities that encourage diversity. But first, it is important to remember that everyone has an important viewpoint and role to play when is comes to culture. The world is becoming increasingly diverse and includes people of many religions, languages, economic groups, and other cultural groups. It is becoming clear that in order to build communities that are successful at improving conditions and resolving problems, we need to understand and appreciate many cultures, establish relationships with people from cultures other than our own, and build strong alliances with different cultural groups. Additionally, we need to bring non-mainstream groups into the center of civic activity. In order to build communities that are powerful enough to attain significant change, we need large numbers of people working together. If cultural groups join forces, they will be more effective in reaching common goals, than if each group operates in isolation. Each cultural groups has unique strengths and perspectives that the larger community can benefit from. We need a wide range of ideas, customs, and wisdom to solve problems and enrich community life. Bringing non-mainstream groups into the center of civic activity can provide fresh perspectives and shed new light on tough problems. Understanding cultures will help us overcome and prevent racial and ethnic divisions. Racial and ethnic divisions result in misunderstandings, loss of opportunities, and sometimes violence. Racial and ethnic conflicts drain communities of financial and human resources; they distract cultural groups from resolving the key issues they have in common. People from different cultures have to be included in decision-making processes in order for programs or policies to be effective. Without the input and support of all the groups involved, decision-making, implementation, and follow through are much less likely to occur. An appreciation of cultural diversity goes hand-in-hand with a just and equitable society. Students feel more accepted, they feel part of the school community, they work harder to achieve, and they are more successful in school. If we do not learn about the influences that cultural groups have had on our mainstream history and culture, we are all missing out on an accurate view of our society and our communities. As you think about diversity, it may be helpful to envision the kind of cultural community you want to build. In order to set some goals related to building relationships between cultures, resolving differences, or building a diverse coalition, it helps to have a vision of the kind of cultural community you hope for. What kind of cultural community do you envision? Can you imagine the kind of cultural community you want to live or work in? People have very

different views of what a multicultural society or community should be like or could be like. In the past few decades there has been a lot of discussion about what it means to live and work together in a society that is diverse as ours. People struggle with different visions of a fair, equitable, moral, and harmonious society. How will the world be unified as a cohesive whole, if people separate into many different cultural groups? In order to be a part of that dream, must I assimilate? Why does racism persist in places that are committed to equality and liberty? How can I protect my children from the harmful influences in the larger culture? How can I instill my children with the moral values of my own religion or culture, but still expose them to a variety of views? Are there structural problems in our government or economic system that serve to divide cultural groups? How can they be changed? Should I put my community building and civic energies into my own cultural community, rather than the mainstream culture? Where can I have the biggest influence? Can oppression be stopped by legislation, or does each person have to overcome their individual prejudice, or both? Why do immigrants have to hold onto their own cultures and languages? If my group is excluded, what can I do? How do I protect my children from being targeted by racism or sexism other forms of discrimination if I live in a diverse society? If each person overcame their own prejudices, would all the divisions disappear? How do I overcome my prejudices? Is prejudice a thing of the past? What do you think about these questions? Which issues do you struggle with? What other issues are important to you or your cultural group? As you envision the kind of diverse community, you and your neighbors may want to consider these kinds of questions. These are some of the real and tough questions that people grapple with on a daily basis. These questions point to some of the tensions that arise as we try to build harmonious, active, and diverse communities in a country as a complex as ours. There are no easy answers; we are all learning as we go. So, what kind of community do you envision for yourself? How will diversity be approached in your community? If you could have your ideal community right now what would it look like? Here are some questions that may help you think about your community: Who lives in your community right now? What kinds of diversity already exists? What kinds of relationships are established between cultural groups? Are the different cultural groups well organized? What kind of struggles between cultures exist? What kind of struggles within cultural groups exist? Are these struggles openly recognized and talked about? Are there efforts to build alliances and coalitions between groups? What issues do different cultural groups have in common? These are some of the questions that can get you thinking about your how to build the kind of community you hope for. What other issues do you think are important to consider? What are your next steps? So, you may ask, "How do we get started? Helpful tips to start building a diverse community In the book, Healing into Action, authors Cherie Brown and George Mazza list principles that, when put into practice, help create a favorable environment for building diverse communities. The following guidelines are taken from their principles: In order for people to commit to working on diversity, every person needs to feel that they will be included and important. Each person needs to feel welcomed in the effort to create a diverse community. And each person needs to know that their culture is important to others. Blaming people as a way of motivating them is not effective. People are more likely to change when they are appreciated and liked, not condemned or guilt-tripped. Treating everyone the same may be unintentionally oppressive. Although every person is unique, some of us have been mistreated or oppressed because we are a member of a particular group. If we ignore these present-day or historical differences, we may fail to understand the needs of those individuals. Often people are afraid that recognizing differences will divide people from each other. However, learning about cultural differences can actually bring people closer together, because it can reveal important parts of each others? It can show us how much we have in common as human beings. People can take on tough issues more readily when the issues are presented with a spirit of hope. We are bombarded daily with newspapers and TV reports of doom and gloom. People have a difficult time functioning at all when they feel there is no hope for change. You will be more effective if you have a group of people around you that works together closely.

Chapter 2 : Teaching Diversity, Differences, and Similarities as Elements of Educational Curriculum for Life

Similarities and differences in settlement and population L1 and l2 writing: similarities, differences, and suggestion List similarities and differences of these microorganisms.

What does "community" mean to you? You can also use visual aids and ask the participants to draw a picture of their idea of a community. This information will help show the participants how much they have in common in terms of their aspirations for a better place to live. Where do you see yourself in the community? What role do you think you play in the community? This information will help indicate how each person and the group they belong to contributes to the community. How does your community reflect and not reflect your idea of a community? This information will help participants learn about the changes that each person wants to see in the community. What existing cultural resources, assets, activities, or structures can you build on to make this the community you want? This information will help identify the strengths of the community, assets of each group, and to recognize previous and current efforts to strengthen the community. What is missing in the community? And what can you do individually and together to make the changes happen? This information will help identify needs and to plan action steps that individuals and their groups can take individually and collectively. As one dialogue progresses and you learn about how you could improve it, you could start another dialogue with a new group of people. You could ask the participants in one dialogue to identify two other leaders or friends to join a new dialogue. You could ask the individuals in the dialogues to help plan these events. These events should be open to everyone in the community. These events will also help to highlight the assets of each group in the community. For instance, you could put together a calendar of new year festivities that each major racial, ethnic, and cultural group in the community celebrates. This means that the date of their new year may fall on a different day every year based on the calendar year. Double check before you make any annual plans. You could then work with the local public library and other public facilities e. For example, during Christmas season, plan events that also celebrate Kwanzaa and Hanukkah. Things paired with primary reinforcers such as food can also take on reinforcing value themselves. Many groups can use the same ingredients and produce different dishes. These dishes are a form of diversity that is non-threatening and typically welcomed by everyone. One idea is to do research on a particular ingredient and then ask each group to share information and to demonstrate how it uses that ingredient. Find out how each group celebrates, commemorates, or grieves over significant events in their history and culture. Take one common subject e. Publicize the information and the events. There is nothing wrong with this approach, but we must remember that appreciating different groups should be a constant practice and not just during certain times in the year. It is better to have different events for all the major groups in your community throughout the year rather than concentrate them during certain months only. What do you currently do in your community to celebrate diversity? When do the events usually occur? How can you plan it so that the events happen on a regular basis throughout the year? Initial questions to guide the planning of events to celebrate diversity include: What are the major celebrations and events in your culture? What would you like to share with the rest of the community about that celebration or event? Are there similar celebrations and events by the other groups in the community? These activities should also be conducted at the same time as the dialogues to identify common ground and the events to celebrate diversity. The main purpose of these activities is to help diverse groups understand the history, oppression, and injustice that form the basis for why groups are treated differently. Are groups treated differently in your community? What quality or qualities separate groups from one another? Visual cues, such as images of African slaves, Chinese railroad workers, or mosques could be used to prompt discussion among a small diverse group. Members could be asked to describe what the images mean to them. Someone knowledgeable about the history of the image could be invited to share the information with the group. Another possibility is to select a significant symbol in the community e. This is a particularly useful exercise for newcomers in a community e. In such campaigns, use

research data e. Examples of ideas for a public education campaign include: A series of articles in the local newspaper about the plight of a group of refugees who recently resettled in the community A series of articles about health disparities between African Americans and European Americans and the possible reasons for the gap Table tents e. This way, you could expand the circle of people who want to do something about the growing diversity of their community and, at the same time, develop a list of potential volunteers. Postcards could be distributed at the end of discussions and field trips for the same purpose. What are the challenges that you should be aware of and how can the challenges be overcome? People could have had positive or negative experiences in the past with processes to get to know each other, build coalitions, or break down group barriers. For example, the Latino administrators in a school may have tried to work with Vietnamese parents in the past through a local Vietnamese organization. The attempt failed because of cultural barriers in communication style. Consequently, the two groups experienced negative feelings about each other. Find out which individuals or groups have tried to work together before and what were their experiences. Interview key leaders, ask them what would encourage people to work together again or for the first time. These group processes, particularly during discussions about power differences, could themselves create tension and conflicts. For example, a Jewish man may feel offended that he is perceived to have economic power because the stereotype of Jews is that they know how to make and save money. The facilitator and the participants must agree on ground rules for handling situations when someone may be offended, hurt, or angered. For example, someone can say out loud, "ouch," or hold up an object. Sometimes, groups tend to compare themselves based on the degree to which they have been oppressed. For example, members of the "untouchable caste" in India may feel that they have suffered oppression of the worst kind because they were discriminated against by people of their own nationality and ethnicity. African Americans may feel that there was no worse oppression than slavery. The facilitator should call out this behavior when they see it, let the groups know that all forms of oppression are wrong. Help the groups understand that their collective effort could help reduce discrimination of all kinds and not just against one particular group. It is difficult to link the process of getting to know one another to taking action. The strategy or process must ensure that such a link is intentionally created during the planning stage and not as an afterthought. For example, an African American leader once said to a group of funders and program managers that the African American community is tired of sitting around and talking. They know what they want and all they need is some funds to carry out their actions. Be explicit about why you are asking people to the table, especially what is in it for them and what is the desired outcome. There has to be adequate time, resources, knowledge, and skills to support the process. Initiating the process without ensuring enough support to complete it could create more harm than good. For example, one organization put a lot of upfront effort and resources into establishing a group to deal with the misrepresentation of immigrants in the media. This process got the group members all fired up, but by the time they developed the action steps, there was no more money to support the steps. This created a lot of frustration and increased the reluctance of this group to get involved in another effort in the future. Take the time to develop a budget and a step-by-step action plan. This plan should be guided by the amount of resources available and reasonably projected. To implement the plan work in phases if you have to and evaluate process and affirm future actions at the end of each phase. In Summary Effort must be made and opportunities created to help members of different racial groups, and cultural groups to learn about, acknowledge, and respect their similarities, differences, and assets. If an effort emphasizes only one of these components the participating members will get an incomplete picture of one another and the groups they belong to. If resources are limited, you might want to consider ways to conduct a smaller-scale activity that conveys all the components, rather than a large-scale activity that emphasizes one of the components only. Print Resources Center for Living Democracy. Center for Living Democracy. Principles for intergroup projects. Association for the Study and Development of Community. Building intergroup relations after September Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, A copy of the paper can be obtained by writing the author at the Association for the Study and Development of Community, South Frederick Avenue, Gaithersburg, MD or at kien capablecommunity.

National Conference for Community and Justice. Building bridges with reliable information. Together in our differences. The National Immigration Forum. For information on how to obtain a copy, contact the National Immigration Forum: A focus on race and ethnic relations. Box , Annapolis Junction, MD or call

Chapter 3 : Cultural Differences Quotes (94 quotes)

Games and activities offer a fun way for young children to learn about differences and similarities among people and to introduce the concept of diversity. All types of differences such as race, religion, language, traditions, and gender can be introduced this way.

Gregorio Billikopf University of California To all who took the proxemics survey between December and June a warm thank you! We are in the process of analyzing the data. Helping Others Resolve Differences, which you may download free here. I was there to provide some technical assistance in the area of agricultural labor management. One of my interpreters, once I was there, explained that a gentleman will pour the limonad type of juice for the ladies and show other courtesies. Toward the end of my three week trip I was invited by my young Russian host and friend Nicolai Vasilevich and his lovely wife Yulya out to dinner. At the end of a wonderful meal Yulya asked if I would like a banana. I politely declined and thanked her, and explained I was most satisfied with the meal. But the whole while my mind was racing: Do I offer her a banana even though they are as close to her as they are to me? What is the polite thing to do? So all the while thinking about Russian politeness I picked the banana Yulya had pointed at and peeled it half way and handed it to her. After this experience I spent much time letting the world know that in Russia, the polite thing is to peel the bananas for the ladies. Sometime during my third trip I was politely disabused of my notion. And here I had been proudly telling everyone about this tidbit of cultural understanding. Certain lessons have to be learned the hard way. Some well meaning articles and presentations on cultural differences have a potential to do more harm than good and may not be as amusing. They present, like my bananas, too many generalizations or quite a distorted view. Some often-heard generalizations about the Hispanic culture include: Hispanics need less personal space, make less eye contact, touch each other more in normal conversation, and are less likely to participate in a meeting. Generalizations are often dangerous, and especially when accompanied by recommendations such as: Here is an attempt to sort out a couple of thoughts on cultural differences. My perspective is that of a foreign born-and-raised Hispanic who has now lived over two decades in the United States and has had much opportunity for international travel and exchange. Commonality of humankind Differences between people within any given nation or culture are much greater than differences between groups. Education, social standing, religion, personality, belief structure, past experience, affection shown in the home, and a myriad of other factors will affect human behavior and culture. Sure there are differences in approach as to what is considered polite and appropriate behavior both on and off the job. In some cultures "yes" means, "I hear you" more than "I agree. For instance, someone who walks into a group of persons eating would say provecho enjoy your meal. In Chile, women often greet both other women and men with a kiss on the cheek. In Russia women often walk arm in arm with their female friends. Paying attention to customs and cultural differences can give someone outside that culture a better chance of assimilation or acceptance. Ignoring these can get an unsuspecting person into trouble. Hence, we are comparing two bell curves and generalization cannot be avoided. True and true, but the danger comes when we act on some of these generalizations, especially when they are based on faulty observation. Acting on generalizations about such matters as eye contact, personal space, touch, and interest in participation can have serious negative consequences. Cross-cultural and status barriers Sometimes, observations about cultural differences are based on scientific observation see, for instance, Argyle, Michael, Bodily Communication, 2nd ed. Argyle cites several studies on non-verbal communications and culture see pp. According to the studies cited, Latin Americans make more eye contact, face each other more, and touch more p. Strong eye contact used by Hispanics goes along with my observations. If Hispanics face each other more, it is probably because of the need for eye contact. I do not believe that Hispanics touch more, with the exception of some very specific social contexts, one of them being between dating or married couples. One of the studies cited more contact among Latin American couples p. Another study showed that Latin Americans stand closer than North

Americans something that goes contrary to my observations but that there are regional variations among countries p. Argyle asserts that there are few genuine cross-cultural studies in the area of spatial behavior. Interestingly, yet another study p. Much of the differences in culture have to do with food preparation, music, and what each culture considers politeness. Food preparation, for instance, can be quite different in various cultures. One farmer could not understand why his workers did not attend a specially prepared end-of-season meal. The meal was being prepared by the farm owners. Instead, when the farm operators provide the beef, pork or other meat but delegate the actual preparation to the workers who can spice up their own way, such a celebration meal can be a great success. Similarly, a diary farmer found out that his Mexican employees were not too excited about getting ground beef as a perk. With world globalization, even tastes in food and music are rapidly changing, however. While I have not conquered this disagreeable human inclination, I feel I am beginning to see the way. Often, observations on cultural differences are based on our own weakness and reflect our inability to connect with that culture. I remember that on several occasions I felt my personal space was being invaded and wondered how Anglo-Saxon men could stand being so close to each other. After all these years, I still feel uncomfortable sitting as close to other men as often dictated by chair arrangements in the US. I am not the exception that proves the rule. Jill Heiken, an HRnet correspondent, explained her learning process this way: It is sort of funny because my wife now realizes that I need to have eye contact while we talk. They were all panicked because I kept looking at my mother as I drove. They felt I was not looking at the road enough and thought we would drive off the mountain. I have a very high need for eye contact. Besides being a native Chilean, I have met, taught, been taught, roomed with, studied with, worked for, worked with, been supervised by, supervised, and been friends with Hispanics from almost every Spanish-speaking country in the world. I have interviewed and done research among hundreds of Hispanic farm workers and have noticed no difficulties with poor eye contact or invasion of personal space. Nor have I ever had difficulties in these areas with people from other nations or cultures. Strong eye contact is partially a factor of shyness; partly a measure of how safe a person feels around another. If those who have written about poor eye contact on the part of Hispanics would walk down a mostly minority neighborhood at dusk, they may also find themselves looking at the ground and making less eye contact. Cross-cultural observations can easily be tainted and contaminated by other factors. Perceived status differences can create barriers between cultures and even within organizations. For instance, farm managers, instructors, and foreign volunteers through universities, peace corps, farmer-to-farmer programs, etc. A person with this status differential will have to show, by word and action, that she values the potential contributions of those she works with. Until this happens she will only obtain compliance but never commitment. At times, then, it may appear that some workers or students, especially when there are social or ethnic differences, do not participate as easily. This is not because they do not have ideas to contribute, but rather, because they may need a little convincing that their ideas would be valued. Once this floodgate of ideas is opened, it will be difficult to stop it. In some sub-cultures, once a person has given an opinion, others are unlikely to contradict it. That is why some organizations ask their least senior employees to give an opinion first, as few will want to contradict the more season employees. Setting up the discussion from the beginning as one where one desires to hear all sort of different opinions, can be very fruitful both in the workplace and in the classroom. Americans have been historically welcome in most of Hispanic America. With a few exceptions they are looked up to, resulting in deferential treatment. This deferential and polite treatment should not be confused for weakness, lack of interest, and the like. Studies conducted some years ago showed African American children preferred White dolls. The Second Edition, Free Press, I believe Hispanics are also valuing their contributions more than in the past, and less subservient behaviors will be observed. Only through equality of respect between races and nations can we reach positive international relations in this global economy as well as peace at home. Cultural and ethnic stereotypes do little to foster this type of equality. Breaking through status barriers can take time and effort. The amount of exertion will depend on many factors, including the skill of the manager teacher, volunteer on the one hand, and how alienated and disenfranchised from the main stream the person he is trying

to reach feels. For example, in East Africa, a non-Black manager speaks to the Black African accountant and the accountant makes little eye contact and responds with submissive "Yes, Sirs" regardless of what he hears. When the manager exits, this same accountant makes plenty of eye contact and is full of ideas and creativity when dealing with those of his same and different race. In another example, an adult class of Hispanic farm workers says nothing to their Anglo-Saxon instructor over a three day period--even though they do not understand what is being taught. This same group of farm workers, when given a chance to be active participants in the learning process, become, in the words of a second Anglo-Saxon instructor at the same junior college, "the best class of students I have ever taught. He advises others not to expect much participation from Hispanics. The first perceives that the lack of participation is somewhat inherent in the Hispanic population; the latter assumes her gender is the cause. Meanwhile, other Hispanic instructors create so much enthusiasm and active participation from the Hispanic audiences they work with, that those who walk by wonder what is going--and why participants seem to be having so much fun. It is not a cultural difference if someone can totally involve a group into a discussion, within minutes, even when that group has had little experience with a more participatory method in the past. Conclusions Stereotyping can have intense negative effects, especially when educators or managers make fewer attempts to involve those of other cultures because they have been taught not to expect participation! Or do not realize there may be something wrong when a student or employee of a different ethnicity makes little eye contact with them. Faye Lee, a concerned Japanese-American wrote:

Chapter 4 : Cultural similarities vs. cultural differences? - Country Navigator

Cultural Similarities and Differences Mexico and Puerto Rico are two popular countries of South America. They share the passionate language of Spanish, though there are some differences in their dialects.

In contrast, children are not yet conditioned to refrain from sharing what they think or asking what they want to know. Earlier on than most people realize, children become aware of and intrigued by the difference in the way people look and behave. In fact, Phyllis A. Katz, while a professor at the University of Colorado, found babies as young as six-months of age stared significantly longer at photographs of adults who were of a different color than their parents. The research evidence clearly indicates that children notice differences in race, ability, family composition and a multitude of other factors. Their questions are attempts to make sense of those observations so they can make sense of their own world. As a parent, I know that children tend to ask the most challenging questions at the most inconvenient times. Rather than trying to quiet your child which implies there is something wrong with the other person or with asking questions take these opportunities to help your child understand and respect differences and similarities among those in your community. Provide brief, objective responses to their questions. In so doing, you will provide your child with personally meaningful information and also introduce concepts from anthropology, history, religion, geography, etc. Teaching your children words in the native language s of your family is a personal way to introduce them to different cultures, as well as family history. There are an abundance of apps that translate and speak words in different languages that can support this effort. Visit your library for books such as: Exposure to other cultures brings personal meaning. Here are more hands-on activities you can try: Expose your children to foods from different cultures, like classic pork and cabbage dumplings or kimchi. Since museums can be overwhelming for young children it helps to talk with your child about what you will see, what she wants to learn and then focus on that part of the museum especially if the museum is large. The most powerful role model. This perspective focuses on the positive characteristics of a person and her abilities, what that person is able to do or does as compared to what he cannot and how differences make our world a better place. By helping your child understand and respect similarities and differences, you will help him realize he is a wonderfully unique person among many other wonderfully unique people on this earth. Proceeds from the sale of books purchased at Amazon. The Diverse World of the Child. Follow her on Twitter TirrellCorbin. You Might Also Like.

Chapter 5 : 3 Ways to Understand and Admire Cultural Differences - wikiHow

The following is a list of diversity, differences, and similarities curriculum topics exploring race, gender, color, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, culture, ability, learning style, and all the diversity or our individual experience through exploration with our senses. We have divided it into 2 categories: "Relational Diversity, Differences.

You desert with your nothing nothing nothing. Acres of suburbs watching the telly. With your big sea. You dumb dirty city with bar stools. You silly shopping town. You too far everywhere. You laugh at me. When I came this woman gave me a box of biscuits. You never ask me to your house. Road road tree tree. I came from crowded and many. I came from rich. You have nothing to offer. You silent on Sunday. Nobody on your streets. You dead at night. You go to sleep too early. You scare me with your hopeless. Asleep when you walk. Too hot to think. You too big sky. You make me a dot in the nowhere. You laugh with your big healthy. You want everyone to be the same. You do like anybody else. Cold day at school playing around at lunchtime. Running around for nothing. You never accept me. You always ask me. You tell me I look strange. You laugh at the way I speak. Idiot centre of your own self. You think the rest of the world walks around without shoes or electric light. You stay at home. You like one another. You go crazy on Saturday night. You put your arm around men in bars. Poor with all your money. You relaxed in your summer stupor. Wait for other people to tell you what to do. You go to work in the morning. You shiver on a tram.

Chapter 6 : How cultural differences may affect student performance | Parenting

Learn how cultural differences can play out in the classroom. Children in various cultures learn different rules for communicating with adults through facial expressions, body language and physical gestures.

University of New Mexico, USA Abstract The growing multicultural nature of education and training environments makes it critical that instructors and instructional designers, especially those working in online learning environments, develop skills to deliver culturally sensitive and culturally adaptive instruction. This article explores research into cultural differences to identify those dimensions of culture that are most likely to impact instructional situations. It presents these in the cultural dimensions of learning framework CDLF , which describes a set of eight cultural parameters regarding social relationships, epistemological beliefs, and temporal perceptions, and illustrates their spectrums of variability as they might be exhibited in instructional situations. The article also explores the literature on instructional design and culture for guidelines on addressing the cross-cultural challenges faced by instructional providers. It suggests that these challenges can be overcome through increased awareness, culturally sensitive communication, modified instructional design processes, and efforts to accommodate the most critical cultural differences. Finally, it describes the use of the CDLF questionnaire as a tool to illuminate the range of preferences existing among learners and to discover the potential range of strategies and tactics that might be useful for a given set of learners. Distance education; online learning; pedagogy; multicultural education

Why Multicultural Education and Training is a Growing Concern Numerous factors are converging that make teaching and learning in cross-cultural and multicultural contexts more commonplace. Expanding world trade and globalization of industry, finance, and many professions are creating a world in which cross-cultural interactions occur more frequently than at any time in the past Friedman, As well, increasing specialization within many professions has led to a widely dispersed audience for targeted education and training. Professionals wishing to stay current or students wanting to develop specialized skills that match the needs of a rapidly changing world demand access to proper educational opportunities, even if this requires international travel or distance learning approaches Berge, Simpler and cheaper telecommunications, in particular, fuel a growing willingness to teach and learn across cultures. Advances in Internet technologies and applications make open and distance learning a fully viable alternative to traditional education, creating a natural environment for the development of effective virtual learning communities. But contrary to the growing flatness that Friedman reports, cultural diversity remains apparent among learners, perhaps owing to deeply rooted cultural values and modes of thinking that are difficult to separate from learning processes Nisbett, A growing appreciation of cultural diversity is demonstrated by more than its acknowledgement and tolerance, but also by a desire to preserve that diversity as a valuable asset for addressing the many challenges faced by the global community now and in the future. Additionally, one can recognize a strong desire to preserve diversity in response to the threat of loss of cultural identity in the face of globalization and because of the benefits of community cohesiveness through unique cultural expression Mason, The growing need for educational access leads students rightly to demand culturally adaptive learning experiences that allow full development of the individual Visser, As noted by Pincas , students entering into professional education in a multicultural context not aligned with their own culture can experience significant conflict. This article provides a summary and consolidation of useful existing literature to aid in developing these skills. For instruction to do the most good for students, instructional providers must be cognizant of the cultures of their learners and how those cultures manifest themselves in learning preferences Nisbett, Cultural sensitivity is not just one-way, however. They should become cognizant of how their own cultural perspectives are represented in the design decisions they make. Furthermore, instructional providers should examine the assumptions they hold about how learners will and should respond, keeping an open mind for potentially unexpected responses. Moreover, they must balance the need to help students adapt to specific professional, academic, and mainstream cultures which instructors, by

proxy, represent and the need to embrace the culture in which the student is embedded Henderson, This is no small challenge. When people demonstrate differences or similarities, it is easy to confuse these levels because their influences combine, making them difficult to distinguish. The resulting uncertainty can lead to false assumptions and difficulties in interactions with others. This is just as true in education and training as it is in other life situations. Hofstede and Hofstede present these levels as a pyramid, with human nature as the base all people share, and personality as the peak, being unique to the individual. Culture forms an expansive middle portion of the pyramid, reflecting its multiple layers of group interactions e. The authors have chosen to represent these influences differently in Figure 1 to highlight an increased complexity and to emphasize the nature of these constructs as mutually influencing sources of thought and behavior. Human nature comprises the assumed commonalities all humans share because they are members of the same species â€" Homo sapiens. People inherit these ways of thinking and behaving because they result from our genetic makeup and the constraints this places on how they respond to the world. These constraints come in the form of sensory capabilities and other physiological traits, as well as predispositions toward socialization, for example. But one can, in practice, see commonalities across the human species. Among many other things, culture includes, There are many layers of culture, from work and family cultures to community and regional cultures up to national and even international cultures based on shared heritage and language. Culture is learned but is also constrained by human nature. Unlike human nature, which is inherited, and culture, which is learned, personality is both learned and inherited. Individuals within cultures vary in ways that are as dramatic as the variations across cultures, and one can map similar personality variations across different cultures. This suggests that personality is in part a reflection of the natural variability within human nature and cuts across cultures. But, also, there is no one-to-one correspondence of personalities across cultures due to the blend of cultural and natural influences on personality. Together, culture and human nature have a monumental influence on individual personalities, yet people are also willful and creative in their responses to the world, frequently stretching or transcending their natural and cultural inclinations. And even though they are products of their cultures, some individuals ultimately have a profound influence on their cultures; consider the ongoing influence that individuals like Confucius or Plato have had on civilizations over thousands of years. Through processes of natural selection, individuals and cultures may even be seen as influencing human nature over time. Deep-rooted as culture may be, a description of any culture is merely a snapshot of a continually evolving matrix of beliefs, values, and behaviors developed through the creative interactions of its constituents as well as through interactions and clashes with other cultures. In addition, while culture is reflected in arts and technologies, it is also influenced by them. The fact that culture is created by the accumulation of historical experience is well acknowledged in education literature through its embrace of cultural-historical activity theory Cole, However, the inevitability of cultural evolution does not suggest that how practitioners carry out cross-cultural interactions in instruction is unimportant. In other words, prioritizing culture in education and training goes beyond wanting to be effective in promoting knowledge acquisition. It is also an ethical concern. Fundamentally, when we teach, we are teaching culture. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes are all manifestations of culture and are not somehow immune to it. Moreover, when we teach, we are passing along not only what we know, but how we come to know it as well as the basis for accepting it as useful knowledge, and the values these represent. Teaching and learning are not only embedded in culture, they are cultural transmission in action â€" the means to culture. In multicultural settings, in particular, this leads to the conundrum posed in the first section that educators must take responsibility to both acculturate students and in the process avoid cultural bias that could impede instructional goals. Potential approaches to this challenge are posed in the upcoming sections. A Framework for Cultural Differences The cultural dimensions of learning framework CDLF Table 1 , adapted from the work of Hofstede and Hofstede , Nisbett , Levine , Hall , and Lewis , is useful for understanding the spectrum of cultural differences that impact the teaching and learning enterprise. Where individuals fall along these dimensions impacts both how instructional providers approach their roles and how students view their own roles and expected behaviors. Accordingly, no end of the

spectrum should be unrecognizable to the reader, regardless of cultural background. Because humans share a common nature, each person is capable of the entire range of thoughts and behaviors that can arise along each of the dimensions. Research shows that cultural differences can be usefully described along these dimensions but that within any culture individuals will differ in how strongly they display these tendencies. This framework differs in scope from the framework offered by Reeves , as cited by Henderson, , which begins from the perspective of pedagogical differences; however, the frameworks reach many of the same conclusions. The CDLF touches upon nearly all the dimensions described by Reeves but includes several new dimensions due to its broader starting point and the benefit of new research performed in the intervening years. It also describes these cultural dimensions in more detail. Even so, the CDLF does not pretend to address all potential cultural dimensions that might be useful to consider. For example, gender roles and differences in non-verbal communications are treated only indirectly. Cultural complexity and the fundamental role of education and training in the transmission of culture make a comprehensive framework impractical to describe in a single article. In presenting their model of cultural dimensions, Hofstede and Hofstede discuss the difference between values and practices as layers of culture. In their terms, cultural values are acquired early in life and are the deepest and most enduring aspects of culture. Cultural practices, on the other hand, are the superficial rituals and norms that are more easily observed. While practices may be reflections of cultural values, they are more subject to change. The most superficial practices are not inevitable outcomes of values; they are often mere trappings that can change without challenging underlying values. In this framework, the eight cultural dimensions represent values. Consequently, the manifested learning behaviors described are more than superficial practices. Instead, they are direct reflections of values, and challenging them may conflict with those underlying values. More research specifically focused on cultural aspects of learning environments is required before this claim can be asserted with full confidence, although compelling research already exists for many of the aspects e. The descriptions of eight key cultural dimensions in the CDLF are offered so that culturally based learning differences can be recognized when they manifest themselves. It is not suggested that each of the dimensions needs to be considered and addressed in every instructional design project. However, those involved in a large multicultural instructional undertaking for the first time may find it useful to study the framework to prepare for the potential differences they might encounter among learners. Parrish and Linder-VanBerschot a offer a survey on culturally based learning preferences, derived from the CDLF, which can also aid in the analysis phase of projects or in the early phases of a course. Another important use of the CDLF is as a tool for instructional providers to understand better their own cultural biases and to account for them in their practice. However, because the framework, even with its numerous dimensions, does not begin to capture the cultural diversity that actually exists, unanticipated differences are likely. Note that while no attempt is made here to classify cultures according to these dimensions, the works cited provide substantial demonstration of how specific national and regional cultures vary. This article instead stresses the spectrums of variability rather than the generalized differences between cultures. Cross-Cultural Challenges for Instruction People make false assumptions when they attribute ways of thinking and behavior to the wrong source of influence human nature, culture, or personality. They may wrongly assume that a particular behavior is a manifestation of personality, perhaps making a value judgment about that individual, when the behavior is actually driven more from the cultural level. Conversely, they may over-generalize conclusions about a particular culture from a few individuals when actually their behaviors are strongly personality driven. For example, instructional providers may assume that they need to teach those from other cultures to adopt new learning behaviors to think and learn properly. The CDLF may aid in avoiding such false assumptions. Humans are highly adaptable, and the situational influences on thought and behavior are significant Lemke, So observing how a person behaves in one situation is not necessarily indicative of how they will behave in another. In addition, people are able to compensate for their cultural conditioning when they find themselves participating in another culture by adopting the behaviors they begin to see as appropriate to that culture. These cases can also lead to additional false assumptions that are more

difficult to avoid. The unique challenge for instructional providers is to understand which learning behaviors are based on deeply entrenched cultural values that should not be challenged and which behaviors are more superficial practices that can be challenged for the sake of promoting learning. In addition, other challenges include a accepting that research-based instructional strategies are also culture-based and may be at times inappropriate, b knowing which instructional activities will be most effective for a particular group of students, and c deciding how instructional strategies should be adapted in cross-cultural and multicultural situations. The existing literature that will aid in addressing these challenges is growing but still limited. Addressing the Challenges of Multicultural Education and Training Many of the challenges to practicing education and training in multicultural contexts have been put forth in the preceding pages with few direct recommendations for changing practice. The challenges, restated more succinctly, are these: The CDLF can be used to help address the first three challenges.

Chapter 7 : BBC Bitesize - KS1 PSHE and Citizenship - Differences and similarities

These, for a start, are cultural similarities, not differences. Try not to perpetuate stereotypes in your own mind by focusing on a person's ethnicity, sexual orientation or faith. Don't make snap judgments and assume somebody is going to be different from you; enter a relationship with an open mind instead.

Blog home Expert View Should we celebrate cultural similarities rather than focus on differences? Should we celebrate cultural similarities rather than focus on differences? By Sue Bryant 25th October Cultural similarities vs. We talk a lot about cultural differences; identifying them, observing them, trying to work around them. Trying to discover common ground and to use these as a basis for a working relationship can often be a more positive approach in a cross-cultural environment. Here are a few points to consider: In the workplace, everybody has common goals. They want to be rewarded; they want to be respected; they want good relationships with their co-workers; and they want some level of job satisfaction. These, for a start, are cultural similarities, not differences. Do not assume that because somebody comes from a certain country that they will behave in a certain way. A study about work-related values published in the Harvard Business Review found that there were far greater differences in cultures within countries rather than between countries. Cultural similarities, on the other hand, were based on factors like education, socio-economic status, generation and occupation, not nationality. When meeting or working with someone from a different culture, think about common values; ideals you might share. Does the other person have a strong faith? It may be different from your faith, but there will be cultural similarities regardless. Are they raising a family? Have they had a similar education to you? Do you have business contacts in common? This is one thing almost all humans have in common. Of course, there are pitfalls to avoid when telling jokes in another language, or to another culture, but finding something mutually funny is a great ice breaker. In the workplace, focus on issues that affect everybody, regardless of their situation and background, and make those issues a common goal to which all employees can work, for example, training, creating a better work-life balance, attending a company social event. Have a strong corporate diversity plan and use it to encourage the acceptance of all employees, regardless of their background. Offer diversity training to all employees, so differences are celebrated, rather than seen as barriers. Regular training, rather than a one-off session, will help to foster a better understanding of customers, suppliers, co-workers and stakeholders. Encourage employees to embrace other cultures in the workplace by celebrating cultural similarities and finding common ground; things like food. Try to find a common approach to problem solving and if the other party tackles it in a different way, use this to your mutual advantage. For example, a German or a Finn may have been taught to take a very methodical in approach; perfectionist, even, whereas a British worker might focus more on creativity and an American on finding a quick solution. Everybody wants to solve the problem, so learn to use the strengths of the other cultures to work towards this common goal. Relationship in business are more important to some cultures than others; generally speaking, Asian, Latin and Arab cultures are heavily relationship-based, while British and American cultures tend to focus more on the deal. There is never any harm in building strong relationships with colleagues and within your industry. Looking at the bigger picture, these relationships will ultimately benefit you. Do cultural differences impact productivity within your organisation?

Chapter 8 : Cultural Differences

As a result, the gap of cultural differences is one of the most important barriers in English teaching and study. Among the students, lacking of cultural background knowledge can, to a great extent.

Chapter 9 : Learning About Cultural Differences and Similarities PDF document - DocSlides

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By helping your child understand and respect similarities and differences you will also help your child to understand who he is in the context of your race, ethnic group, culture, religion.