

How to cultivate intercultural competence

Intercultural incidents

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Independent

Group 1

During university in the United States, a male student asked me out to dinner. I refused as we were just friends and to me going to dinner meant jumping to boyfriend/girlfriend status, and we barely knew each other. The boy asked me again a few days later, and I declined again for the same reasons.

Group 2

A very close friend of mine (from Turkey) had a girlfriend in D.C. (they are married now). She is from Utah and she was working at Bank of America at that time. In my whole life until that moment, I never thought that drinking coffee can be an issue for some certain belief systems. In the society I am coming from drinking alcohol is a big issue for the belief system, but drinking coffee is not.

I just got 3 coffees and walked to the park and I gave a coffee to my friend and the other coffee to his girlfriend, but his girlfriend refused to take coffee.

My friend told me in Turkish “don’t insist too much!

Group 3

When I first moved to the UK, I sometimes had what I would call annoying experiences with UK citizens. For example, I remember one of my new British neighbors asking me if we left our guns in storage in the US since guns are illegal in the UK. When I replied that we didn't own any guns and were supportive of strict gun control laws in the US, they were surprised and said they thought all Americans owned guns.

Group 4

You are a tourist visiting Lebanon and have been invited to dinner by a group of locals. At the end of the meal, the bill arrives, and everyone looks to you to pay your portion. However, you are not accustomed to the idea of splitting bills and find it uncomfortable to ask for separate checks.

Group 5

A Jewish teacher and an Arab professor have recently been hired at the same university in a Middle Eastern country. During their orientation, they are both advised by their colleagues that it is not appropriate to address their new boss by their first name. However, the Jewish teacher is used to a more informal workplace culture and feels uncomfortable using titles.

Group 6

During a tutorial, two classmates of a different nationality started conversing in their native language. As a domestic student, I felt uneasy as I couldn't understand whether their conversation was related to our coursework or discussing people (including myself) in the room.

Group 7

One lecturer, when getting feedback from group work, always refers to the group as X's group where X is always a white person, often the only white person in the group. I doubt it's intentional, but it sends a subconscious message about who is 'in charge' in a multi-ethnic group

Group 8

I thought it would just be easy to come here and like 'okay get to know the English culture and stuff'... it is quite hard to understand...because... they don't really share much about themselves. It is very superficial. That's really how I feel. I was just not expecting that... I get on better with the international students.— international student Yeah, but maybe because their lifestyles are different and they don't go out as much as we do, maybe it is okay to

Group 9

You are a foreign businessman who has traveled to Russia to negotiate a business deal with a local company. During the meeting, you are surprised by the theatrics of the Russian executives, including temper tantrums, table-thumping, and sudden walkouts. You feel uncomfortable with this style of communication and are unsure how to proceed.

Group 10

Paolo, an electronics distributor in Italy, is in the middle of an important meeting with the representative of a potential Japanese supplier in Tokyo. During the exchange of business cards at the beginning of the meeting, Paolo took the representative's card, folded it in two and slipped it into his back pocket. The Japanese negotiator seemed less friendly after that.

Group 11

On one of my first days at the university. I wasn't sure where a certain office was on campus, so I stopped an Uruguayan student to ask. She offered to walk me there, and on the way, she introduced herself, offered me some of the mate she was drinking, and asked me some questions about myself. Her friendliness caught me a little off guard, as someone here would likely offer directions, but nothing more.

Group 12

I was teaching an English course. All of the sudden, I saw this very good student I had from another course the previous semester. When I saw her, I was excited to see her because I remembered she had big plans for her life and was curious to hear about how things were going. When we were face to face, I extended my hand to greet her, but when I did that, she kept talking without extending her hand. This continued for (what I believe was) about ten seconds. However, it felt like an eternity! That had never happened to me.

Group 13

Several guy friends in college hugged or tried to hug me. One particular incident, I was walking back from class with a male friend and as we were parting ways, he hugged me